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TWELVE SERMONS

ON THE MOST IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

BY THE REVEREND

EDWARD SMYTH.

All ſcripture is given by inſpiration of GOD; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs, that the man of GOD may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works. 2 TIM. iii. 16, 17.

BELFAST:

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M.DCC.LXXVIII.

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MAY

TWELVE

SERMONS

ON THE

Moſt important Subjects.

SERMON I.

MATTHEW xxii. 42.

What think ye of CHRIST? *Whoſe Son is he?*

THE learned *Scribes* and *Phariſees* among the *Jews*, were the moſt inveterate enemies to CHRIST, and his Goſpel; and, therefore, the Evangeliſt informs us in this chapter, that *they took counſel how they might entangle him in his talk.* By propoſing ſome captious, knotty queſtions to him, they were in hopes his anſwers might give them ſufficient cauſe for accuſing him before the

Sanhedrim, the members of which, they knew, were diſpoſed, as well as themſelves, to put him to death. But Chriſt, tho' *harmleſs as a dove*, was yet *wiſe as a ſerpent*; yea, he was the *wiſdom of God*, who *ſpake as never man ſpake*. Therefore, inſtead of affording his adverſaries any occaſion for a public charge againſt him, he ſo confounded them by his replies to their ſeveral interrogatories, that *they marvelled, and left him, and went their way*.

Again he was attacked by the *Sadducees*, whom alſo he put to ſilence; ſo that *the multitude were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine*. But, as the wicked are like the troubled ſea which cannot reſt, the *Phariſees* once more aſſembled, and appointed a lawyer to tempt him further by another intricate queſtion; his anſwer to which was ſo ſatisfactory, that the lawyer was convinced, and forced to confeſs, *Maſter, thou haſt ſaid the truth*.

Having thus confuted all their cavils, our SAVIOUR, in his turn, ſaid to them, in the words of the text, *What think ye of* CHRIST? *Whoſe ſon is he?* And, ſurely, in this age of ſcepticiſm and infidelity, the miniſters of God have need to make the ſame enquiry. What ſay ye, then, my brethren? *What think ye of Chriſt?* It is much to be feared that many of you never think of him at all—never conſider for what end he came into the world, died, or roſe again. *God is not in all*, nor, perhaps, in any of *your thoughts*. But, as for thoſe amongſt you, who, in ſome ſerious moment, reflect upon the SAVIOUR *of the world*, what judgment have ye formed of him? *Whoſe ſon is he?* The majority of you, I am afraid, have haſtily determined the matter already, without ſufficient previous examination; and as *groſs darkneſs*

ness covers the people, I may expect the same ready answer which the self-righteous *Pharisees* gave to Christ, *He is the son of David.* True—for thus did the Lord speak by the mouth of one of his prophets, *There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse* (the father of David) *and a branch shall grow out of his roots.* Isa. xi. 1. Accordingly, St. *Paul* bears witness to the accomplishment of this prophecy, saying, *Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a saviour, Jesus.* But, is he not the *son of God*, yea, GOD himself, as well as *the Son of man?* Surely he is, if there be any truth in the scriptures. When the angel *Gabriel* was sent from GOD to *Mary*, he informed her that *the* HOLY THING *which should be born of her should be great, and be called the Son of God, the Son of the Highest.* Luke i. 32. And St. *Peter*, who was *an eye-witness of his Majesty*, assures us that *Christ received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* This *beloved Son, who is in the bosom of the Father*, is distinguished from the adopted sons of God, by epithets appropriate only to himself; such as, *the first born of many brethren—the begotten—the first and only begotten, conceived of the Holy Ghost.* If he was not more than man—*greater than the temple—greater than Solomon—greater than John the Baptist—worthy of more glory than Moses—anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, why should the sacred writers so frequently mention his incarnation in such terms, as prove it to be a most supernatural event? *He was made flesh—was made of a woman—was made in the likeness of men—was found in fashion as a man*, and *took part of flesh and blood.*

Why this periphrasis in describing his human nature, if there was no hypostatical union of his divine nature? It is remarkable that in almost every part of the book of God, where the *humanity* of *Jesus Christ* is spoken of, his *Divinity*, also, is clearly pointed out. The holy penmen were well acquainted with the perverseness and pride of man; and knew that *fleshly wisdom* would oppose this fundamental truth—that fallen Reason would object to Revelation, denying that the human and divine nature could be in *one* person. But that they were conjoined in the adorable person of the *Messiah*, is evident from the following passages of holy writ. *Behold! a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is,* GOD *with us.* Isa. 7. 14. *Unto us a Child is born—unto us a Son is given—and his name shall be called the* MIGHTY GOD, *the* EVERLASTING FATHER. Isa. 9. 6. Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth, that *a child—an infant of a span long*, should be the MIGHTY GOD! that a created *Son*, should be the EVERLASTING FATHER! *Behold! the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous* BRANCH, *and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The* LORD (JEHOVAH in the original) *our righteousness.* Jer. 23. 5. But again —In the fifth chapter of the *Revelation*, he that is the *Branch* is also styled *the Root of David.* And he *sent his angels to testify unto the church*, in every age of the world, saying, *I am the Root and the offspring of David.* Rev. 22. 16. As *man*, therefore, he was the *Branch* and *offspring*—as GOD, he was the *Root.* When *the Lord of hosts* (speaking by the prophet *Zechariah*, 13, 7.) foretells the vengeance that would be poured forth on

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his CHRIST, he breaks out into this awful exclamation, *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the* MAN *that is* MY FELLOW. St. *John* affirms that *the Word* (which *was* GOD) *was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* John 1. 1, 14. Among the peculiar privileges of the *Israelites* enumerated by St. *Paul*, he inserts this—*Whose are the Fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all,* GOD *blessed for ever.* Rom. 9. 5. And then he add this concise, but comprehensive prayer, *Amen.* So be it. ——let all acknowledge it——let all adore him. When writing to the *Philippians*, (2. 6, &c.) he says, *Christ Jesus who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be* EQUAL *with God, made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of* JESUS *every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is* LORD, *to the glory of God the Father.* Here we find the GOD-MAN set forth in his humiliation, and exaltation. Here the *Messiah* is described as divesting himself of *that glory which he had with God before the world was*, and veiling his majestick dignity in a tabernacle of clay—as faithfully executing the gracious purpose for which he descended to this sinful world, and as rising up on high *far above all principalities and powers*, that the celestial hosts, and *every nation, kindred,*

kindred, people, and tongue, should pay him homages, professing him to be the LORD (JEHOVAH) whereby they should glorify God the Father. All worship offered to the highly-exalted Son, instead of derogating from the honour or majesty of the Father, redounds to his glory, if we may credit the apostle, or Christ himself, who observes, *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father*. John 5. 23. And wherefore? Because God hath given him his own name, which is *above every other*, even the name of Jesus, a Saviour. Various are the passages which positively ascertain his being our LORD and SAVIOUR; but he could not possibly be so, if he were not that God who hath said, *I, even I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour*. Isa. 43. 11. Hosea 13. 4. But further—If Christ be not more than *the Son of David*, *how then* (asks Christ himself) *doth David, in spirit, call him* LORD, *saying, the Lord said unto* MY LORD, *sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David, then, call him* LORD, *how is he his* SON? If that holy man of God, who *spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost*, allowed Christ to be *his* LORD, and acknowledged that he was to be subject to the imperial sway of this *Prince of peace*, is it not evident that he then considered Christ, not as his descendant, not merely as a man, but as that Almighty Shiloh (or peace-maker) at whose coming *the sceptre should depart from Judah, and a law-giver from between his feet*? Was it not quite inconsistent in an Ancestor, and a Father, to call an unborn successor, and a Son, HIS LORD, if he did not know, by immediate inspiration from on high, that he was the supreme GOD? It is utterly impossible to understand

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the phraſeology of *David*, and the other inſpired writers, if we do not admit the *divinity* of JESUS CHRIST; and the ſcriptures are full of inexplicable difficulties! The unbelieving *Phariſees*, therefore, tho' men of great erudition, were incapable of ſolving the queries which Chriſt put to them: And no man (ſays the Evangeliſt) *was able to anſwer him a word, neither durſt any man from that day forth, aſk him any more* inſnaring *queſtions.*

But many in this generation, *wiſe in their own eyes*, are aſhamed of being foiled even by Chriſt himſelf, the wonderful Counſellor: Therefore, they have renewed the controverſy, and, *by oppoſitions of ſcience (falſly ſo called)* have endeavoured to ſubvert the faith of *chriſtians*, with regard to this momentous point. But the Lord Jeſus ſhall anſwer them, to their utter aſtoniſhment, when *the great day of his wrath ſhall come*, and he ſhall be *revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know him not, and that obey not his goſpel.* Oh that they were wiſe indeed! Oh that they *knew the things which make for their* preſent and eternal *peace!* Oh that theſe arch-heretieks *Arius*, and *Socinus*, were permitted to tell them of their dreadful miſtake! But thoſe who believe not the prophets and apoſtles, neither deſerve an extraordinary revelation, nor *would they be perſuaded, tho' one ſhould riſe from the dead.* However, ſome there are, I truſt, who will impartially conſider what even ſuch *a babler* as I have to ſay. May the *ſpirit of truth* direct *my* pen, and open *your* hearts to *receive the word with joy.*

The doctrine which I am defending reſts not upon a few texts of dubious interpretation: It

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is interwoven throughout the whole book of God. Beſides thoſe direct, perſuaſive arguments already produced, I ſhall ſubjoin ſtill more, which, I pray God, may have the ſame weight with *you*, that they have had with *me*.

St. *Paul* expreſsly affirms that GOD *was manifeſt in the fleſh, believed on in the world, and received up into glory*: And, alſo, that *God was in Chriſt, reconciling* the world unto HIMSELF. 1 Tim. 3. 16.—2 Cor. 5. 19. He calls Chriſt *the bleſſed and* ONLY *Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who* ONLY *hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee.* 1 Tim. 6. 15. And, anſwerable to this is the account which an angel gives of our glorious Saviour. *The Lamb is* LORD OF LORDS and KING OF KINGS, Rev. 17. 14. He whoſe *name is called, The word of God; hath on his veſture, and on his thigh, a name written,* KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. 19. 13, 16. As there is but *one faith, one baptiſm*, &c. ſo there is but *one* LORD, ſays the ſame apoſtle. *Eph.* 4. 5. And St. *Peter* declares that *Jeſus Chriſt is* LORD *of all*. Acts 10. 36. If, therefore, he be not one with God the Father, the Father is here excluded from being LORD. This argument will receive farther corroboration from a paſſage in *Paul*'s epiſtle to the *Corinthians*. *To us there is but one* GOD *the* FATHER, *of whom are all things, and we in him; and one* LORD *Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him.* 1 Cor. 8. 6. Here the ſame power, with reſpect to the formation and ſupport of all things, is equally aſcribed to the Father and the Son; and that they are eſſentially united is manifeſt: For if Jeſus Chriſt be not the *one* GOD

here mentioned, by parity of reasoning, the Father is not the *one* LORD. St. *Paul*, when exhorting the elders of the church at *Ephesus* to take heed to themselves and to their flock, adds, *Feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.* Acts 20. 28. And, similar to this is that proposition of St. *John*, *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.* 1 John 3. 16. They do not hereby insinuate that the God of nature died (for this spiritual Being is incapable of suffering) but that Jesus Christ, who was GOD as well as man, underwent the punishment due to our sins in that *human nature*, which he had assumed into his *divine*. *It behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.* Heb. 2. 17. In order to expiate the sins of man, he *laid down his life* as man, bearing the curse of God in that very nature in which we had offended. Because no created being could possibly fulfil the holy law of GOD, or make adequate satisfaction to injured justice, the second person of the adorable Trinity said, *Lo, I come, in that body which thou hast prepared for me, to do thy will, O God.* So that, *thro' the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* Heb. 10. 7, 10, 14.

When Jesus Christ sent and signified to his servant *John*, a revelation of *things which should shortly come to pass*, it was by the ministry of his angel. Rev. 1. 1. And in the latter part of that book, (22. 6.) we are informed, that *the* LORD GOD *of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.* Hence it follows, that JESUS CHRIST is

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the LORD GOD *of the holy prophets*, to whom the angels are ſubject. While, alſo, he was preparing his beloved diſciple for the reception of the prophecy, he introduces it with theſe words. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, ſaith the* LORD, *which is, and which was, and which is to come, the* ALMIGHTY. *I am* THE FIRST AND THE LAST. Rev. 1. 8, 11. Now, if theſe latter titles truly and properly belong to him, he muſt be no leſs a perſonage than the great GOD of heaven and earth, *beſides whom there is no other*. For, *thus ſaith the* LORD, *the* KING OF ISRAEL, *and his* REDEEMER, *the* LORD OF HOSTS, *I am the firſt, and I am the laſt, and beſides me there is no* GOD. And, is not Chriſt, moreover, frequently called THE REDEEMER, *and* KING OF ISRAEL? In ſhort, are not all the divine titles, attributes, powers, perfections, indiſcriminately aſcribed to the Father and the Son? Becauſe there is no ſubordination between them, but they are equal in might and majeſty, Chriſt ſays, (when ſpeaking of thoſe that believed on him) *All mine, O Father, are thine, and thine are mine.* John 17. 10. And again—*All things that the* FATHER *hath are mine; therefore, ſaid I, that he ſhall take of mine—ſhall* RECEIVE OF MINE—*and ſhall ſhew it unto you.* John 16. 15. Were I to quibble upon words (as the *Arians* do when vainly ſtriving to undeify Chriſt) I might here obſerve that he ſeems, in this latter ſentence, to make the Father *inferior* to him, by repreſenting the Father as *receiving ſpiritual gifts* from him. *All the churches*, (ſays Chriſt again) *ſhall know that I am he which ſearcheth the reins and heart.* Rev. 2. 23. And *Peter* confeſſes his omniſcience, ſaying, LORD *thou knoweſt all things.* St. John alſo obſerves

ſerves, *He knew what was in man.* But omniſcience is the prerogative of GOD alone. Pſal. 44. 21. Conſequently, Chriſt muſt be the intelligent GOD who pervades all things. *This is his name* (ſays *Jeremiah*, 23. 6.) *whereby he ſhall be called*, the LORD, or JEHOVAH. Now this name is *peculiar* to the moſt high GOD: For, thus ſays the Pſalmiſt, (83. 18.) *Thou whoſe name alone is* JEHOVAH, *art the moſt High over all the earth.* As, therefore, Chriſt bears that emphatical appellation, He is the MOST HIGH *over all the earth.*

When *David* is deſcribing the perverſeneſs of the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, he ſays, *They tempted, and provoked* THE MOST HIGH GOD: Pſal. 78. 56. And (alluding to this) when St. *Paul* was exhorting the *Corinthians* to take heed leſt they ſhould fall, he adds, *Let us not tempt Chriſt, as ſome of them alſo tempted.* 1 Cor. 10. 9. From hence 'tis apparent, that Chriſt (who *was the ſpiritual rock that followed them*) is THE MOST HIGH GOD.

The ſame apoſtle ſays again, *He that built all things is* GOD—Therefore, Chriſt is GOD: For, continues he, *By Chriſt were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.* Yea, he is not only the Maker of heaven and earth, and all their hoſts, but he ſtill *upholds them by the word of his power:* And, ere they were brought forth, he was—*He is* BEFORE *all things, and by him all things conſiſt.* Col. 1. 16.

The apoſtle of the *Gentiles* declares of Melchiſedec (who was a moſt exact, and eminent type of Chriſt) that he was *without father, without mo-*

ther, without deſcent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a prieſt continually Heb. 7. 3. As *Moſes* who wrote the hiſtory of *Melchiſedec, king of Salem* (which is, by interpretation, *king of righteouſneſs and of peace*) is entirely ſilent about his genealogy—as he has recorded nothing relative to his anceſtors—nothing either of his birth, or death, or of his ſucceſſors to the prieſtly office, ſo Jeſus Chriſt (*the* LORD *our righteouſneſs, and the Prince of peace*) was *without father*, as touching his *manhood*, and *without mother*, as touching his *godhead*. Being ſelf-exiſtent, he was *without deſcent*; for, *who* (ſays Iſaiah, 53. 8.) *ſhall declare his generation? Being the antient of days, from everlaſting to everlaſting, the ſame unchangeable* GOD, *he had neither beginning of days, nor end of life*, becauſe *it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of death*: Acts 2. 24. And he now *abideth a prieſt continually, ever living to make interceſſion for us.*

When in converſation with the unbelieving Jews, Chriſt ſaid to them, *Your father Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day, and he ſaw it, and was glad.* On their replying, Thou art not *yet fifty years old, and haſt thou ſeen Abraham?* he ſaid again, *Verily, verily, before Abraham was,* I AM. He does not ſay *I was*, but I AM; plainly intimating to them that he was the ſupreme GOD who was *before all things*, this being the incommunicable name, by which JEHOVAH choſe to be known in the patriarchal age. At another time, he alſo told them, *If ye believe not that* I AM, *ye ſhall die in your ſins*, John 8. 24. Tremble, ye *Arians*, tremble, leſt ye, likewiſe, periſh everlaſtingly: For if ye *die in your ſins, where* CHRIST *is, ye cannot go.* Be-

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cauſe he was the eternal GOD, he prayed thus, immediately preceding his crucifixion, *O Father, glorify thou me with thine* OWNSELF—*with the glory which I had with thee* BEFORE THE WORLD WAS. And when his diſciples were ſorrowful, on account of his approaching departure from them, he ſaid, *Let not your heart be troubled—ye believe in* GOD, *believe alſo in* ME. *I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by* ME. *If ye had known* ME, *ye ſhould have known my Father alſo; and from henceforth ye know him, and have ſeen him. Philip then ſaid to him,* LORD, *ſhew us the* FATHER, *and it ſufficeth us. Jeſus anſwered, Have I been ſo long time with you, and yet haſt thou not known me, Philip? He that hath ſeen* ME, *hath ſeen the* FATHER; *and how ſayeſt thou then, Shew us the* FATHER? *Believe me that I am in the* FATHER, *and the* FATHER *in* ME; *or elſe believe me for the very works ſake.* John 14. 1, &c. Here he appeals to his miracles as an indubitable foundation for faith in *him*: And becauſe he wrought them *with the finger of* GOD, he told the Jews (after healing the impotent man at the pool) *My* FATHER *worketh hitherto, and I work.* But inſtead of acknowledging his divine power, *they ſought to kill him, becauſe he ſaid that God was his Father, making himſelf* EQUAL *with* GOD. John 5. 18. And when, on another occaſion, he ſaid to them, *I and my Father are* ONE, they *took up ſtones to ſtone him*: And when he aſked them, *For which of the many good works that I have ſhewed you from my Father do ye ſtone me?* they anſwered him, *For a good work we ſtone thee not; but for blaſphemy, and becauſe that thou being a* MAN, *makeſt thyſelf* GOD. John 10. 30, &c. A favourable opportunity was

here given him of obviating their objections, if they had really misapprehended his meaning; and it was his indispensable duty to remove every *stumbling-block* out of the way: Yet so far was he from retracting his former assertions with respect to his *Godhead*, that he rather enforced the important truth, saying, *Is it not written in your law, I said ye are Gods. Now, if he called them Gods, unto whom the word of God came, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not: But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know that the Father is in me, and I in him.* John 10. 36, &c. None of the ancient fathers, or holy men of God, ever pretended to assume such an union of power and nature with *the Lord of hosts*. If, therefore, Jesus Christ was not essentially GOD, the *Jews* had just reason to say, *This* MAN *blasphemeth, and is a sinner—he deceiveth the people—he hath a devil, and is mad—why hear ye him?* Nay, he must have been an egregious impostor, for permitting his disciples, and others, to *worship him:* And the *apostles* must have been more *meek and lowly in heart* than he was, as they would not suffer the heathen priest to *sacrifice unto them with the people*, but candidly confessed, *We also are* MEN *of like passions with you.*

But, far be it from professing *christians* to think thus lightly of *the Author of* their *faith*. While some among the carnal multitude imagine that he is *John the Baptist*, some *Elias*, and others that he is *Jeremias, or one of the Prophets*, a *disciple* can say, with *Peter*, He is Christ, *the Son of the living God*: And *blessed* is that man, *for flesh and blood hath not revealed it* unto him, but the *Father which*

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is in heaven. If *He* be allowed to determine the divinity of his Son, he thus bears witnefs of it. *Thy throne,* O GOD, *is for ever and ever: And thou,* LORD, *in the beginning, haft laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hand: They fhall perifh, but Thou remaineft; and they all fhall wax old as doth a garment, and as a veſture fhalt thou fold them up, and they fhall be changed: but thou art the ſame, and thy years fhall not fail.* Heb. 1. 8, &c. When he comes to judge the world in righteouſneſs, then ſhall this earth, and all the works that are therein, be burnt up—*the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens be rolled together as a ſcroll*—while He who gave them exiſtence, and who was from everlaſting, ſhall continue to everlaſting, invariably the ſame Lord Jeſus, YESTERDAY, *to day, and for ever.* Heb. 13. 8.

All commentators on the Bible imagine (I believe) that the deſcription which *Solomon* gives of Wiſdom, in his 8th chap. of Proverbs, refers primarily to the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the wiſdom of* GOD: For as *perſonal* actions and properties are attributed to it, they cannot be applicable to an *Attribute*; therefore the divine *Intelligence* himſelf is ſuppoſed here to ſpeak. *The Lord poſſeſſed me in the beginning of his way,* BEFORE *his works of old. I was ſet up* FROM EVERLASTING, *or ever the earth was.* BEFORE *the mountains were ſettled*—BEFORE *the hills, was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth. When he prepared the heavens, I was there—when he ſet a compaſs upon the face of the depth—when he eſtabliſhed the clouds above, and appointed the foundations of the earth. Then I was by him, as one* BROUGHT UP WITH HIM; *and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always*

before him—rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the ſons of men.

Again—with regard to the *eternity* of Chriſt, the prophet *Micah* teſtifys, that *his goings forth have been from of old—from everlaſting.* 5. 2.—St. *John* maintains the ſame truth, ſaying, *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and* THE WORD WAS GOD. *All things were made by Him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* Thus is Chriſt proved to be *co-exiſtent* with the Father, and *co-equal* in agency. 'Tis obſervable that the exordium of St. *John*'s goſpel, is begun in the very ſame words with which the creation of the world is introduced by *Moſes*; as if it were to ſhew that he alluded to the firſt chapter of *Geneſis*, and that Chriſt was the *eternal Word—the divine Logos*—who ſaid, *Let there be light*, and at whoſe almighty fiat, *there was light.* In the formation of this material ſyſtem, we find, alſo, that the Holy Ghoſt was concerned, co-operating with the Father, and the Son—*The* SPIRIT *of* GOD *moved upon the face of the waters.* And 'tis further evident that there was a plurality of perſons from the addreſs of God, *Let* US *make man in* OUR *image—after* OUR *likeneſs.* Some think to overthrow the force of this argument, by obſerving, that this mode of diction is peculiar to every great perſonage. But, how could God adopt a form of ſpeech which was not in uſe, the words in queſtion being ſpoken before *Adam* was created? It appears, then, that *Princes of the earth* have borrowed this language from GOD, and not GOD from them. And tho' they may ſpeak of themſelves in the plural number (to denote their dignity) ſaying, *We*, or *Us*, yet they never ſay *One of us.* Now GOD thus ſpeaks

—*Behold*,

—*Behold, the man is become like* ONE OF US, which plainly proves that there are more perſons than one in the Godhead—St. *John* has told us in direct terms, *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe* THREE *are* ONE. 1 John 5. 7.—Tho' reaſon may cavil, and wit ſhoot all its fiery darts, yet this is the word of God, which ſtandeth faſt, and abideth for ever: And it is our bounden duty to believe it, on the authority of that GOD who has declared it. That the ſhort line of our finite capacity cannot fathom this myſterious deep, I muſt acknowledge. But are we not equally loſt in thought how even *one* perſon could independently exiſt from all eternity, and how he is ſtill to endure when ten thouſand times ten thouſand centuries ſhall be paſt and gone? Nay what poſſible notion can we form of *eternity* itſelf? How far, alſo, above the reach of our circumſcribed underſtandings are many phænomena in nature with which we are daily converſant? "If our being able, "or not being able, to *comprehend* (ſays a modern "writer) is to determine what is, and what is not "truth, will it not equally make againſt the be- "lief of every thing we ſee with our eyes? What "ſingle viſible thing is it that we comprehend? "Do we know of what an hair of our head *con-* "*ſiſts?* Or underſtand how it *grows?* Can we "comprehend the intrinſic *nature* of a blade of "graſs, or tell how it *opens* from the ſeed, *ex-* "*pands* and *forms* itſelf into its ſhape and ſize? "Can we deſcribe how it aſſumes *one* colour, or "ſends forth *this* ſcent, and not *another?* Are we "able to diſcover how the particles of matter co- "here? Or can we fathom what matter is? Sup- "poſing, then, that the Creator were to have

" treated on these things, disclosed their hidden
" nature, descanted on their mysterious existence,
" defined *what* they are, or displayed their several
" wonders; can we suppose it would be level to
" our capacity, or, reaching above it, seem con-
" trary to our reason? Would it not be said of
" every flower of the field, as of its great Creator,
" Jesus Christ, *The light shineth in darkness, and*
" *the darkness comprehendeth it not?* Yet the loss
" we are at to fathom the ocean of mysteries in
" every part of the creation, is never urged as a
" a proof against its existence."

Secret things (says *Moses*) belong *unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our children.* It is *presumption*, therefore, to pry into the arcana of God, to dive into those depths which he designs to hide from our view; and 'tis *blasphemy* to discredit what he avers, though it may appear contrary to the powers of our fallen reason. Here *we know but in part —we see as through a glass darkly.* When *this corruptible shall put on incorruption*, then shall we know those things which are now utterly unintelligible. Therefore, instead of being *puffed up in our fleshly minds*, we should be humbled under a sense of our ignorance, and contracted views, and should learn to admire what we cannot comprehend, and to adore that *God who giveth not account of any of his matters*, crying out with astonishment, *Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Rom. 11. 33.

But, *vain man would be wise*—though, while he *professes himself wise, he becomes a fool.* St. *Paul* tells us that GOD *manifest in the flesh is a great* MYSTERY. And therefore he prays that the

hearts

hearts of the *Coloſſians might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full aſſurance of underſtanding, to the acknowledgment of the* MYSTERY *of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt, in whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge. And this I ſay* (continues he) *leſt any man ſhould beguile you with enticing words.* Then he prudently ſets them upon their guard, ſaying, *Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through* PHILOSOPHY, *and* VAIN DECEIT, *after the tradition of* MEN, *after the rudiments of the* WORLD, *and not after Chriſt: For in* HIM *dwelleth all the fulneſs of the* GODHEAD *bodily.* Col. 2. 2, &c. On this latter quotation, a celebrated writer has the following comment. "The *apoſtle* foreſaw, that "a *thing* calling itſelf philoſophy, would ſet all "its engines at work to deſtroy the notion of "Chriſt's true and abſolute divinity—*For in him* "(ſays he) *dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead* "*bodily. Philoſophy* will diſpute this, and under-"take to demonſtrate the contrary: But if you "liſten to ſuch *vain* deceit, it will overthrow your "faith, and *ſpoil you* for a diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt. "Therefore——*Beware.*"

St. *Peter* foretold that *falſe teachers ſhould ariſe, who would privily bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them: And many* (he has declared) *ſhall follow their pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom the way of truth ſhall be evil-ſpoken of, and through covetouſneſs, ſhall they, with feigned words, make merchandiſe of you.* 2 Pet. 2. 1, &c. Such *falſe prophets*, my brethren, are now ſwarming in our land, like the locuſts in *Egypt*, and *for filthy lucres ſake*, for their annual ſtipends, are teaching *the traditions of men, denying the Lord that bought them.* But wo be unto them, and thoſe that

that hear them. *They are bringing upon themselves swift destruction—their judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.* Therefore, my beloved, let me conjure you no longer to remain under the sound of their word; for it will *eat as doth a canker*, and prove *the savour of death*. Believe Christ who is the *truth*, rather than those, who, from mercenary motives, are *speaking a lying divination*. *He that hateth me*, (says He) *hateth my Father also: For I and my Father are* ONE. John 10. 30—15. 23.—*He that believeth on me, and seeth me, believeth on him, and seeth him that sent me.* John 12. 44, 45. The inferiority which seems implied here, and in other parts of scripture, only relates to his *manhood*. As *man* he was *sent*, and therefore, is called the *Messenger*; and yet this *Messenger* is the LORD himself, having a distinctly-personal divine nature united to his human nature. Accordingly, when *Malachi* predicted the coming of CHRIST, he said, *The* LORD *whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the* MESSENGER *of the covenant.* Mal. 3. 1. Not a single text can be produced which positively declares "CHRIST is not GOD;" but a multiplicity of passages occur, which, in the most express terms, pronounce that "He is GOD." Therefore those parts of holy writ which seem to depreciate the Lord Jesus Christ, are only applicable to his *humanity*. And if we constantly bear this in mind, that He was man, "of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting," as well as God, the scriptures which speak of him in both natures are perfectly reconcileable—all seeming contradictions are at once removed: But, if He be not "very GOD of very GOD," all the art of man

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can never make the ſacred oracles appear conſiſtent.

Let, then, *every tongue confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is* LORD, and bleſs the *God of Iſrael* for *raiſing up an horn of ſalvation for us, in the houſe of his ſervant David. Let all the angels of God worſhip him*, is the command of the moſt Higheſt. In obedience to it, *ten thouſand times ten thouſand angels* are *ſaying, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing.* While cherubim and ſeraphim are thus employed, ſhall a haughty worm refuſe to bow the knee, and cry out, *Hoſanna to the Son of David—Hoſanna in the higheſt?* At the time of his birth, *the wiſe men of the Eaſt* ſaid, *We are come to worſhip him:* And *when they had opened their treaſures, they preſented unto him gifts—gold, and frankincenſe, and myrrh*, which were the uſual offerings to a King, a Prieſt and a Prophet. Many, indeed, will yet with their *lips* acknowledge Him in his threefold offices. But alas! while they are not taught by him the leſſons of his grace—while they know nothing of the application of his atoning blood to their guilty ſouls—while he does not rule over them, *bringing into captivity every thought*—their profeſſions avail nothing: Like *Judas*, they betray him with a *kiſs*, ſaying; *Hail Maſter!* when they are not his ſervants. Like the inſulting ſoldiers, they *put a reed in his hand*, and a *ſcarlet robe* on his back, as the enſigns of royalty, but *ſcourge* him, and *crucify him afreſh* by their ſins: And tho' they pretend to be his worſhippers, and ſay, *Hail, King of the Jews!* yet they only *ſpit in his face*, and *buffet* him, when they do not ſerve him *in ſpirit and in truth*, by a holy and devout life.

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As he is GOD *over all*, he muſt be *worſhipped in the beauty of holineſs:* And yet many there are, who, like *Herod* and his *men of war, ſet him at nought, and mock him*, counting him "a mere man;" ſo that if his divinity were to be decided by public ſuffrage, I doubt not but *the voices of the people, and of the chief-prieſts* would *prevail*. But *their* determination appears, to me, a moſt convincing argument *for* it; as St. *John* has obſerved that *the whole world* (i. e. the generality of mankind) *lieth in wickedneſs*, therefore cannot *diſcern the things of God*. On the other *hand*, all "the noble army of martyrs," with all the truly enlightened men of every age, have ſet their ſeal to this leading article of the chriſtian creed, which (I think) is one of the ſtrongeſt confirmations of the truth of it. When *Stephen, full of the Holy Ghoſt*, ſaid, *Behold! I ſee the heavens opened, and Jeſus ſtanding on the right hand of God*, the wicked rabble ſtoned him to death, while he was *calling upon* GOD, *and ſaying, Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit*. Acts 7. 59. Thus with his dying breath he confeſſed the Lord Jeſus to be GOD, and *committed the keeping of his ſoul to him*. Therefore, tho' *the heathen rage*—tho' againſt this doctrine *the kings of the earth do ſet themſelves, and the rulers* (of Satan's ſynagogue) *take counſel together*, yet the *divinity* of Chriſt is the Rock on which the church is built, and the gates of hell ſhall never prevail againſt it. 'Tis the main pillar of chriſtianity—the whole ſyſtem ſtands, or falls, with it. Deſtroy this, and the floodgates of infidelity are opened wide. For my part, I profeſs, if Chriſt be not what He is called, *The mighty God*, all my comforts muſt die—all my hopes muſt periſh. In vain have I believed in him, if He be

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not that GOD who alone is able to reanimate my sleeping dust, and to open the doors of the grave. Could any created being raise himself from the dead? Yet Christ did—He said to the *Jews, I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again.* John 10. 18. *Destroy the temple of my body, and in three days I will raise it up.* But his *Sovereignty* is further ascertained by these words. *As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickneth them, even so the Son quickneth whom he will: For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* John 5. 21, &c.

Shall I, then, doubt of his divinity, because proud Sceptics do? God forbid! Far be the thought from me, and far from all, in whose hearts *Jesus Christ is formed, the hope of glory.* Such can declare from *sensible* evidence that he is *The* LORD *of life*, spiritual and eternal; and each can say for himself, with believing *Thomas, My* LORD, and *my* GOD. *No man*, says St. *Paul, can call Jesus*, LORD, *but by the Holy Ghost*: And Christ says, *The Spirit of truth shall testify of me.* Destitute, therefore, of that Spirit, who alone reveals the deep and hidden things of God, no wonder that the haughty, sensual *disputers of this world* contradict, and blaspheme. But the LORD *stilleth the tumult of the people*: Therefore, tho' they *imagine a vain thing*, and fight against the Lord's *anointed*, yet *hath he set his King upon his holy hill of Zion.*

Were I to ask the *believing* part of my readers (or audience) *What think* YE *of* CHRIST, *whom man despiseth, whom the nation abhorreth?* they would answer, *My beloved is the chiefest among ten thousand—*

thousand—he is *altogether lovely*. He is my *sun*, and my *shield* to enlighten and defend me—He is my *strong tower*, and *the horn of my salvation*—my *King* and my *God*—my *Saviour* and *Redeemer*. But, alas! are there not many who cannot thus speak! Ye *lovers of pleasure*, little have ye hitherto thought of Christ. Oh, *let the time past suffice. What think ye* now of him? Has he yet no *form, nor comliness*, nor *beauty* for you, that ye *should desire him?* Are you still asking, *Is not this the carpenter's Son? Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* Let Christ answer for himself—*Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.* But why should ye still remain in unbelief? Let me beseech you, no longer cry out *Away with this* MAN—*We will not have this* MAN *to reign over us*: For He has declared that he will say to his angels, in *the great and notable day of* the Lord, *Those mine enemies who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.*

Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, ye mighty, and ye noble; and be instructed ye that are judges of the earth. *Not many* of you *are called.* Ye are *prudent in your own eyes*, and *will not come unto* CHRIST, *that ye may have life.* But now hear his call by me, even me. Take the advice of the Psalmist, *Kiss the* SON, *lest he be angry, and ye perish*—lest this *Lion of the tribe of Judah break you with a rod of iron, and dash you in pieces, like a potter's vessel.* For, *if his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

This is the record which God hath given of his Son—*He that hath the* SON *hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.* If you have not the *Lord Jesus Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith*, ye are undone for ever. *Seek*, therefore, such

such a living faith in him, as will enable you to say, with the believers of old, *We are in him, that is true, even in Jesus Christ who is the true* GOD, *and eternal life.* 1 John 5. 20.

SERMON II.

2 CHRON. XX. 20.

Believe in the Lord your God, ſo ſhall ye be eſtabliſhed—believe his Prophets, ſo ſhall ye proſper.

IN the beginning of this chapter, we are informed that the children of Moab and of Ammon, with powerful auxiliaries, came againſt Jehoſhaphat, king of Judah, to battle. This righteous prince, tho' he had *an hundred and fourſcore thouſand men ready prepared for war*, truſted not in the arm of fleſh, but placed his hope in the Lord his God, who breaketh the bow, and knappeth the ſpear in ſunder. Knowing that if the alliance of the mighty God could be ſecured, all the united hoſts of earth and hell would never be able to prevail againſt him, he ſet himſelf to ſeek the Lord, and proclaimed a faſt throughout all Judah; commanding the ſeveral tribes, with their wives, and their little ones, to gather themſelves together to aſk help of the Lord. Then, ſtanding in the great congregation, he poured out his ſoul in prayer unto the God of his Fathers, who ruleth over all the kingdoms of the heathen, and in whoſe hand there is power and might, ſo that none is able to withſtand him "*O our God* (cried he) wilt thou not judge our enemies? For we have no might againſt this great company that cometh againſt us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." Great was the confidence

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of this man of God, and, therefore, the ears of the Lord were attentive unto the prayer which he offered up in his ſanctuary. Immediately he anſwered the requeſt of his holy ſervant, by pouring forth his Spirit upon one of the Levites, who ſaid, "Be not afraid, nor diſmayed, by reaſon of this great multitude, for the battle is not your's, but God's. Ye ſhall not need to fight in this battle—ſet yourſelves, ſtand ye ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jeruſalem—Fear not, nor be diſmayed: To-morrow go out againſt them, for the Lord will be with you." And Jehoſhaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, in token of his belief in the promiſe of God, and all the people fell before the Lord, worſhipping, and the Levites ſtood up to praiſe the God of Iſrael, with a loud voice on high: For, it is as much the duty of his believing people to praiſe him for thoſe future bleſſings of which his word has aſſured them, as if they were actually conferred; knowing that faithful is he who hath promiſed. Poſſeſſed of this ſtedfaſt confidence, Judah, and the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, went forth early in the morning to face their invaders: And the king, inſtead of charging them to keep good diſcipline, and to fight boldly, deſires them to take the armour of God—the ſhield of faith, wherewith they would be enabled to reſiſt and repel the force of their enemies. *Believe in the Lord your God* (ſaid he) *ſo ſhall ye be eſtabliſhed: Believe his prophets, ſo ſhall ye proſper.* Then, appointing ſingers unto the Lord, they praiſed the beauty of holineſs as they went out before the army, ſaying, *Praiſe the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever.* With this van-guard approaching the enemy, the Lord of hoſts cauſed the children of Ammon and

Moab to riſe up with the ſword againſt their own allies, and afterwards to deſtroy one another. Thus was Iſrael miraculouſly delivered out of the hands of thoſe that oppreſſed them, becauſe they believed in the Lord God of the holy prophets.

But, alas! may we not now truly ſay with David, "The godly man ceaſeth, the faithful fail from among the children of men?" May not Chriſt upbraid profeſſing chriſtians at this day, with unbelief and hardneſs of heart, as juſtly as he did the Jews of old? Have we not given him great reaſon to exclaim, *O faithleſs and perverſe generation, how long ſhall I ſuffer you?* Indeed, as St. Paul declares, *All men have not faith.*

If we conſider faith in a general ſenſe, or in the moſt vulgar acceptation of the word, it ſignifies An aſſent of the mind to any thing which is propoſed, and is founded on the truth or teſtimony of the author. All, therefore, who firmly depend upon the authority of divine revelation, may be ſaid to believe in God who gave it, and in the prophets, by whom he delivered it as the manifeſto of his will: Accordingly *Faith* is defined by St. Paul to be *the ſubſtance* (or, as the margin renders it, the ground or confidence) *of things hoped for—the evidence of things not ſeen:* Heb. 11. 1.—And *by this faith* (adds he) *the elders obtained a good report.* It will, then, be beſt illuſtrated by examining the conduct of thoſe who were influenced by a firm reliance on the veracity of God; and, on the contrary, the behaviour of thoſe who were not actuated by ſuch a perſuaſion.

Begin we, then, with Abraham, who, on account of his unſhaken truſt in God, and fiducial belief of his holy word, is emphatically ſtiled *The father of the faithful*, and *the friend of God.*

When

When the Lord appeared unto him, and ſaid, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's houſe, unto a land that I will ſhew thee," he obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went. He conſidered not his own eaſe or comfort, but, at the command of God, forſook his beloved companions, his deareſt and neareſt relatives, ſimply relying upon his providential guardian care, and ſubmitting to divine wiſdom to direct his ſteps. He ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as in a ſtrange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob. He knew this earth was not his reſt—that he had no continuing city—but that he would ſhortly be removed to a more permanent abode. Therefore, he lived in a continual preparation for death, dwelling in a moveable tent; to denote that he looked for a city which hath foundations, whoſe Maker and Builder is God. On that everlaſting reſt which remaineth for the people of God, was the eye of his ſoul fixed. He had an internal conviction that when he ſhould finiſh his courſe, and the weariſome journey of life was over, he would be received into everlaſting habitations.

At another time, when God told him that Sarah ſhould bear him a ſon, and that kings of people ſhould be born of her, though, at firſt, he fell on his face, and laughed, ſaying in his heart, "Shall a child be born unto me that am an hundred years old? And ſhall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?" Yet upon the renewed promiſe of God, againſt hope, he believed in hope that he might become the Father of many nations. Not being weak in faith, he conſidered not his own body, now almoſt as good as dead, neither yet the deadneſs of Sarah's womb. He ſtaggered not at the

promiſe

promiſe of God thro' unbelief, but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully perſuaded that what he had promiſed, he was able alſo to perform, Rom. 4. 18, &c.

But a ſtill more remarkable inſtance of his implicit faith in God, and filial obedience to him, was the offering up of his ſon. Who can think of this, without being amazed at the reſolution and fidelity of the aged Patriarch? It was, indeed, a fiery trial; and therefore, ſays Moſes, *God tempted him*—he put his faith to the proof. Abraham might have thus reaſoned with himſelf—"What! ſhall I ſlay my ſon, mine only ſon Iſaac, whom I love ſo dearly? Will I not thus, alſo, cut off all hopes of a numerous iſſue from him, and ſo my own family become extinct? Shall I put him to death, and thus prevent the coming of the Meſſiah, who is *the Deſire of all nations?* Will I not hereby make the promiſe of God of none effect, and fruſtrate all the bleſſings of the new and everlaſting covenant, eſtabliſhed in my ſeed? O my ſon, my ſon, I cannot, I will not give thee up. Would I not be worſe than ſavage beaſts, to imbrue my hands in the blood of the fruit of my own loins? My very heart recoils at the thought. Conſider, O my God, the yearnings of a father's bowels, and forgive my refuſal; for I cannot be the murderer of my ſon, and bring down my grey hairs with ſorrow to the grave." But, 'tis the property of faith to ſilence all miſgiving reaſonings. He did not, therefore, argue thus, nor even attempt to expoſtulate with his Maker. He betrayed not the leaſt diſtruſt of that God who had given him a ſon, in his old age, and, conſequently, was able to raiſe him up from the dead. He knew that all things were poſſible unto God, and that, from the burnt

burnt aſhes of the ſacrifice, another child might ariſe at the word of him who ſaid, *Let there be light, and there was light.* The emotions of the tender father were ſuppreſſed by the more powerful feelings of a believing heart. And now, behold his ſtretched forth arm! No door of hope ſeems open—no proſpect of eſcape preſents itſelf—the blooming youth muſt die. The father is inexorable——deaf to his piteous cries. See the pointed dagger ready to be plunged into the naked breaſt of the innocent victim! The fatal blow is juſt deſcending! Hark! An angel of the Lord calls out of heaven, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad—Now I know that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt not with-held thy ſon, thine only ſon from me. By myſelf have I ſworn, ſaith the Lord, becauſe thou haſt done this thing, in bleſſing I will bleſs thee, and I will multiply thy ſeed as the ſtars of heaven, and as the ſand which is upon the ſea-ſhore, and thy ſeed ſhall poſſeſs the gate of his enemies: And in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed, becauſe thou haſt obeyed my voice." Was ever faith ſo exerciſed? Was ever obedience ſo richly rewarded!

Reader, if you deſire to be eſteemed a child of Abraham, or a ſon of God, Go, and do thou likewiſe—Follow the faith of Abraham—forſake all that you have—give up your darling ſin—the ſin that moſt eaſily beſets you—your boſom-ſin which *thou loveſt*. Part with each beloved luſt—though it were dear to you as a right hand, cut it off—though it were precious to you as a right eye, pluck it out, and caſt it from you—ſacrifice it at the command of God, and you ſhall be recompenced at the reſurrection of the juſt.

In

In the first age of the world, when God saw that the wickedness of man was great, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually, he determined to bring a flood of waters upon the earth, and to destroy all flesh wherein was the breath of life from under heaven. But, as he willeth not the death of sinners, he gave them 120 years space to repent, and commissioned Noah, who was a just man, and perfect in his generation, to give them notice of the approaching deluge; if, peradventure, they would turn to the Lord, and live. At the same time, God ordered him to make an ark of Gopher-wood, for himself and his family: And (says the sacred historian) according to all that God commanded him, so did he. But alas! in vain did he assure the unbelieving world of the dreadful calamity which was coming upon them. They rejected the counsel of this preacher of righteousness and *would none of his reproof.* They still went on after the devices of their own desperately wicked hearts,—they were *eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage*, heedless of the Lord, and all his menaces, 'till, at last, the threatened judgment came, and all flesh was swept away from off the face of the earth with *the besom of destruction.*

Thus Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Heb. 11. 7. Reader, would you escape the *over-running flood* of God's wrath, *which shall make an utter end of his enemies*, be admonished by his prophets, and fly to Christ, the ark of the new covenant: For *his name is as a strong*

a ſtrong tower—the righteous run into it, and are ſafe.

When the cry of Sodom had waxen great before the face of the Lord, he ſent his angels to conſume it, and to deliver Lot (whoſe righteous ſoul was vexed with the filthy converſation of the wicked) from the general deſtruction. But when he ſaid unto his ſons in law, "*Up—get ye out of this city, for the Lord will deſtroy it,*" *he ſeemed unto them as one that mocked.* Well would it have been for them had they taken his ſalutary advice: For, after Lot, his wife, and two daughters, were brought forth by the angels, and ſet without the city, *the Lord rained upon it brimſtone and fire out of heaven,* and all the inhabitants, and that which grew upon the ground, were burnt up. To demonſtrate, alſo, the damning nature of unbelief, our Saviour deſires his diſciples to *remember Lot's wife,* who becauſe ſhe looked back (contrary to the command of God) was turned into a pillar of ſalt. Oh take ſpecial heed, ye that have begun in the ſpirit, leſt ye end in the fleſh, and be made monuments of the vengeance of God. Eſcape for your lives—look not behind you—turn not back again to ſin and folly—ſtay not in all the plain—but flee to the mountain—loiter not by the way—make haſte to heaven the place of your reſt, leſt ye be conſumed.

After the Lord had delivered the Iſraelites from the houſe of bondage, they were purſued by Pharaoh and his hoſt. Then murmured they againſt Moſes, fearing leſt they ſhould die in the wilderneſs, as they ſaw no poſſibility of eſcape, the Red-ſea before them obſtructing their flight. But he ſaid unto them, "Fear ye not, ſtand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord, which he will ſhew you

to

to day: For the Egyptians whom ye have ſeen to day, ye ſhall ſee them again no more for ever. The Lord ſhall fight for you, and ye ſhall hold your peace." Then Moſes ſtretched out his hand over the ſea, and the Lord cauſed it to go back by a ſtrong eaſt-wind, and the waters were divided, and became a wall to them on their right hand, and on their left. And they, ſays St. Paul, *by faith paſſed through the Red-ſea, as by dry land*; which, returning to its ſtrength, rolled back its impetuous waves upon their enemies, who went into the midſt of the ſea after them. And when Iſrael ſaw the Egyptians dead upon the ſhore, *they feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his ſervant Moſes.*

Great, alſo, was the faith of Joſhua, who, at the ſiege of Jericho, by the order of God, went about the city for ſeven days, with prieſts blowing before the ark ſeven trumpets of rams horns. This might have ſeemed to the eye of ſenſe a moſt unlikely method to effect the demolition of a ſtrong garriſon, but to the eye of faith, it appeared replete with ſucceſs. Therefore, though he was probably ridiculed by his enemies, yet he literally followed the command of God: And, on the ſeventh day, when the prieſts made a long blaſt, and the people gave a great ſhout, the wall fell down flat; and they took the city, and utterly deſtroyed all that was in it, except the harlot Rahab (and her kindred) who, alſo, believed in God, when ſhe received the ſpies with peace. Heb. 11. 31.

Strong and operative was the power of faith in Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego. When they were brought before the Babyloniſh tyrant, he ſaid unto them, in his rage and fury, "If ye fall not down, and worſhip the golden image which I have

have set up, ye shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace, and who is that God that will deliver you out of my hands?" But they replied, without the least dismay, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury; and, commanding the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be, these three men were bound, and cast into the midst of it. But behold! *the Saviour of Israel in every time of trouble* was near at hand—was present in the furnace to preserve them. And when Nebuchadnezzar saw him walking in the midst of the fire, he said, "Ye servants of the most high God, come forth." Then came they forth, and there was not an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor had even the smell of fire passed on them. Surely we may say, the ways of the Lord are past finding out. How often does it appear, even to us, that he brings good out of seeming evil. The cruelty of this monarch was the means of giving exercise to the faith of God's children, and to the power of God, which being manifested in such an extraordinary manner, occasioned his worship to be set up in an idolatrous kingdom. For Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the kings word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve, nor worship any

God, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which ſpeak any thing amiſs againſt the God of Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego, ſhall be cut in pieces, and their houſes ſhall be made a dunghill, becauſe there is no other God that can deliver after this ſort." Then the king promoted theſe men in the province of Babylon.

Again—Though Darius had publiſhed an edict, prohibiting every perſon in his dominions from aſking a petition of any God or man for thirty days, ſave of him alone, under peril of being caſt into a den of lions, yet Daniel relaxed not in his ordinary duty to God, but even opened the windows of his chamber, and kneeled down three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he was wont to do. Therefore, when the jealous preſidents and princes, who were contriving his ruin, informed the king of it, he was caſt into the den. But that God, who encampeth round about them that fear him, ſent his angel to ſhut the mouths of the voracious lions; and Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, *becauſe he believed in his God.* Then king Darius made a decree that, in every part of his kingdom, men ſhould tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: And Daniel *proſpered* in his reign.

When Shaphan, the ſcribe, read the book of the law before Joſiah, this godly prince rent his clothes, on finding that the wrath of the Lord was kindled againſt his people, becauſe their fathers had not hearkened to the words which were written therein. And, on enquiring of a propheteſs concerning the predicted deſtruction, he received this anſwer, " Becauſe thine heart was tender, and thou

thou haſt humbled thyſelf before the Lord, when thou didſt hear what I ſpake againſt this place, and the inhabitants thereof, that they ſhould become a deſolation and a curſe, and haſt rent thy clothes, and wept before me, I alſo have heard thee, ſaith the Lord. Behold, therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou ſhalt be gathered into thy grave in peace, and thine eyes ſhall not ſee all the evil which I will bring upon this place." 2 Kings 22. 19. Thus, by *believing the prophets* who foretold the deſtruction that was coming on his people, he eſcaped the divine vengeance which was poured forth on the diſobedient, and impenitent.

In the deliverance of the Ninevites, alſo, from the ruin which was impending over them, we may diſcover the readineſs of God to reward all thoſe who repent, and believe the threatnings of his prophets. When their wickedneſs came up before God, and Jonah was ſent to cry theſe words thro' the ſtreets of their city, "Yet forty days and Nineveh ſhall be overthrown;" the people thereof *believed God*, and proclaimed a faſt, and put on ſackcloth from the greateſt of them even to the leaſt. The very king himſelf aroſe from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with ſackcloth, and ſat on aſhes; And he cauſed it to be publiſhed thro' Nineveh, that neither man nor beaſt ſhould taſte any thing, but that they ſhould be covered with ſackcloth, and cry mightily unto God. "Let them turn (ſaid he) every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in hands—Who can tell if God will repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not?" What then was the iſſue of their humiliation, and faith? God ſaw their works, that they turned

from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had ſaid he would do unto them, and he did it not. Jonah 3. 4, &c.

So firmly did the woman of Canaan believe in the mighty power of Chriſt to caſt out the devil with which ſhe was ſo grievouſly vexed, that though, at firſt, he ſeemed to deny her requeſt, yet ſhe perſiſted in her intreaties, and ſpoke in ſuch humbling terms of herſelf, that Chriſt ſaid unto her, "O woman, great is thy faith—be it unto thee even as thou wilt!"—And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

In like manner, when Jeſus ſaid to the nobleman, "Go thy way, thy ſon liveth!"—he *believed the word that was ſpoken to him*; and from that moment, his ſon began to amend.

Such, alſo, was the faith of the woman who had an iſſue of blood for twelve years, that ſhe ſaid within herſelf, "If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I ſhall be whole:" And, accordingly, when ſhe touched him, virtue came out of him, and ſtraightway the fountain of her blood was dried up, and ſhe felt in her body that ſhe was healed of the plague. Then Jeſus ſaid unto her, "Daughter, go in peace—thy *faith* hath made thee whole."

When, likewiſe, Chriſt told the Centurion he would go and heal his ſick ſervant, he humbly anſwered, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof; but ſpeak the word only, and my ſervant ſhall be healed." This was ſuch a ſtriking inſtance of *lively faith*, that Jeſus marvelled and ſaid to them that followed him, "Verily, I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo great faith, no, not in *Iſrael*."——Oh, take heed, ye that profeſs yourſelves the *Iſrael of God*, his

elect

elect peculiar people, leſt this *Gentile* riſe up in judgment againſt you, and condemn you. For "many (adds Chriſt) ſhall come from the eaſt, and from the weſt, and ſhall ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom (to whom pertained the adoption, and the covenants, and the ſervice of God, and the promiſes) ſhall be caſt into outer darkneſs, where ſhall be weeping, and gnaſhing of teeth."

We have now ſeen the prevalence, and victory of faith, in a variety of examples, collected from ſcripture-hiſtory: And it appears that all who *believed in the Lord their God, and in his prophets, proſpered* and were *eſtabliſhed*.

Then, ſhould not their intrepid courage, and the many miraculous interpoſitions of Providence in their behalf, when reduced to the utmoſt extremities, animate our faith and truſt in God?

But ah! my brethren, have not the meſſengers of the Lord much reaſon to aſk; "If the Son of man were now to come, and ſummon the world to his bar, *would he find faith upon the earth?* Indeed we are *a froward generation—children in whom is no faith*. Few, very few there are, who have experienced *juſtifying faith* in the blood of the Lamb; and really there are not many who have even the *hiſtorical faith* which they pretend to.

Numbers, 'tis true, can ſay with their *lips*, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth," but in their *lives* they daily deny him. The viſible things of creation ſo clearly evince the exiſtence of an omnipotent Agent, that ſcarce any, I preſume, are ſo blinded by the prince of darkneſs, as to doubt that there is an

uncreated Being, who made, and upholds all things by the word of his power. But, ſurely, a bare acknowledgment of his being our Creator is not a ſufficient indication that we *believe in God*. Faith in him implies ſuch an unſhaken reliance on his fatherly love and protection, as removes all fear that has torment. It teaches us to deny ourſelves—to renounce our own worldly wiſdom, and to commit ourſelves entirely to his guidance—to caſt all our care upon him who careth for us—to lie before him, as paſſive clay in the hands of the potter—and to ſay, *Not our will, but thine, O Lord, be done*. It gives us a chearful acquieſcence under every diſpenſation of heaven, however diſaſtrous it may ſeem. In ſhort, it puts to ſilence every ſcruple that may ariſe in the breaſt, with regard to the adminiſtration of God's government, and teſtifys that *all things*, whether of a proſperous or adverſe nature, *ſhall work together for good to them that love God*.

Now, if we examine the conduct of the bulk of mankind by theſe eſſential properties of faith, we may readily diſcover their total want of this diſtinguiſhing grace. They will not truſt God farther than they can ſee him; but take corrupt reaſon for their guide, inſtead of revelation. They lean to their own underſtanding, their own ſtrength, in all the viciſſitudes, and emergencies of life. They are living without God, and without hope, in the world. If their corn, and wine, and oil increaſe, they ſay in their hearts, "My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth." They make riches their ſtrong city, and ſay unto the fine gold, "Thou art my confidence." Every thing that befalls them they attribute intirely to ſecond cauſes, and neither praiſe God as the bountiful

ful Donor of all they enjoy, nor call upon him in the time of trouble, when their comforts are withdrawn.

If the Lord be pleaſed to lay them upon a bed of languiſhing, in hopes to awaken their drowſy conſciences to repentance, and to alarm their fears, they accept not the puniſhment of their iniquities, but murmur againſt the kind hand that adminiſters it; and, like Aſa, *ſeek not to the Lord, but to the phyſicians.* When the public judgments of God are abroad in the earth, and the ſword is going thro' their land, they put their truſt in chariots, and horſes, and in the multitude of their hoſts, inſtead of flying for refuge to the Lord of all the hoſts in earth and heaven, who leads the princes away ſpoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.

With reſpect to the word of God, revealed to them thro' the miniſtration of his holy prophets, they look upon it as *a cunningly-deviſed fable*, and make a jeſt of all thoſe paſſages that deſcribe the torments of hell; or, at leaſt, ſay, that "they are only figurative expreſſions." Tho' dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, they cannot be brought to think, that *except they be born again, they ſhall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Tho' they are ſowing to the fleſh, they imagine they ſhall reap life everlaſting; and will not give credit to thoſe who tell them, that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all unrighteouſneſs, and ungodlineſs of men. In ſhort, they ſeem to place a more implicit confidence in the word of *man*, than they do in the word, or oath, of *God*.

If they read, in ſome hiſtorical book, an account of mount Veſuvius, that emits great flames of fire —throws up ſtones of an immenſe magnitude into the air, and diſcharges a burning lava, which lays

lays waſte the country wherever it ſpreads, they never entertain the leaſt doubt of the authenticity of the relation, or the narrator. But tho' they find it written in the ſacred code, that *Tophet is ordained of old* for all the ungodly—that there is a deep and wide *lake, which burneth with fire and brimſtone*, where *the ſmoke of their torments ſhall aſcend up for ever and ever*, they are ſlow of heart to believe. This is an hard ſaying (they cry out) who can hear it? Nay they will mock the miniſter of God, who is warning them to eſcape the damnation of hell; and can never be perſuaded that it is moved from beneath to meet them at their coming.

When the public papers inform them of the dreadful devaſtations, and bloodſhed, which the war with America has occaſioned, no one queſtions the truth of the intelligence. But, tho' the conſentient voice of all God's prophets declares, that *he hath bent his bow, and made it ready, and hath prepared for them the inſtruments of death*—that he will *whet his glittering ſword, and make it drunk with their blood*, they will not believe. They refuſe to hearken, and pull away the ſhoulder, and ſtop their ears, that they ſhould not hear: Yea, they make their hearts as an adamant-ſtone, leſt they ſhould hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hoſts hath ſent in his Spirit by his prophets. They pay more attention and regard to the fictions of lying travellers, and the wild chimeras of fabulous writers, than they do to the truths of the goſpel. Therefore becauſe they *believe* not *God*, nor the declarations of his *prophets*, they ſhall not be eſtabliſhed in grace or glory—they ſhall not *proſper* in this world, nor in that which is to come.

Aſſuredly,

Aſſuredly, *unbelief* is the confluence of all other ſins—'tis the inlet to every vice. If we will neither be awed into fear by the threatnings of God, and the terrors of his wrath, nor melted into love by the great and precious promiſes which are given us, deſperate, indeed, is our condition. No wonder that we run into all exceſs of riot, and work uncleanneſs with greedineſs.

It was *unbelief* which brought temporal and everlaſting deſtruction upon the Jewiſh nation. Chriſt *came unto his own, but his own received him not*. It renders ineffectual all the kind deſigns of God towards us: For, ſays Iſaiah, *If ye will not believe, ſurely, ye ſhall not be eſtabliſhed.* When Zacharias began to heſitate concerning the accompliſhment of the promiſe which God had made to him, the Meſſenger of the glad tidings ſaid to him, "Behold, thou ſhalt be dumb, and not able to ſpeak, until the day that theſe things ſhall be performed, becauſe thou believeſt not my words." And when the Jews were offended at Chriſt, on account of the meanneſs of his parentage, we are told by the Evangeliſt, that *he* COULD *do no mighty works in his own country, becauſe of their unbelief.* For the ſame reaſon, the diſciples could not caſt out a devil which ſore vexed a lunatic, tho' their divine Lord had given them power over unclean ſpirits. When their faith began to waver, like Samſon, they were ſhorn of their ſtrength. At the time that Samaria was beſieged by the Syrians, and there was a ſore famine in the city, Eliſha foretold that there ſhould be plenty, in the ſpace of one day. But a lord, on whoſe hand the king leaned, anſwered the man of God, and ſaid, "Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be!" Eliſha replied, "Behold,

hold, thou ſhalt ſee it with thine eyes, but ſhalt not eat thereof:" And accordingly, on the next day, when the people of Samaria were bringing into the city the ſpoils which they had taken in the camp deſerted by the Syrians, they trod upon him in the gate, and he died.

Seeing then, my brethren, the diſmal effects of *unbelief*, let me ſtir you up to pray for active *faith*. *Bleſſed are they that believe, for there ſhall be a performance of thoſe things which are told them from the Lord.* What greater affront can we poſſibly offer unto God than to diſcredit his word? The true chriſtian doubts not in his heart, but ſteadily believes that whatever God has ſaid ſhall aſſuredly come to paſs. Therefore, in all the changes and chances of this mortal life, let our truſt be in the Lord for ever; for, in the *Lord Jehovah* is everlaſting ſtrength.

Are you, then, viſited with pain, or ſickneſs? Conſider it as the ſign of your legitimation, and adoption into the family of God: For, *what ſon is he whom the father chaſteneth not? If we be without chaſtiſement, whereof all are partakers, then are we baſtards and not ſons.* When your faith is tried, like gold in the furnace, it will come forth the brighter, and all the droſs be left behind—God, in his own due time, will ſay unto the affliction, "*It is enough.*"

Are you reduced almoſt to a ſtate of beggary? Have you ſcarce a place where to lay your head? Then you more nearly reſemble the captain of your ſalvation, who was made perfect thro' ſufferings, before he entered into his glory. Let patience have its perfect work, knowing that an houſe awaits you, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Be content, then, with ſuch things as you

you have; for the Lord hath ſaid, "I will never leave thee nor forſake thee:" So that you may boldly ſay, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear—Though thou ſlay me, yet will I truſt in thee."

Are you advanced to affluence? In time of proſperity, conſider. Oh take heed leſt the deceitfulneſs of riches, and the cares of this world, choke the word, and you become unfruitful. Still bear in mind the words of Chriſt, *It is eaſier for a camel to go thro' the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* Do not, however, deſpair—*Believe in God*, and he will deliver you from the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life. If you look upon yourſelf only as the almoner of Providence, your wealth, inſtead of proving a ſnare, will become a bleſſing to yourſelf, and others—It will make the widow's heart to dance for joy.

Do you hear of wars, and rumours of wars? They are the ſigns of the ſecond coming of Chriſt. Let not, therefore, your heart be troubled. A good man, ſays Solomon, ſhall not be afraid of evil tidings; for his heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord, whoſe eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of thoſe, whoſe hearts are perfect towards him. *Thou ſhalt not*, ſays he, *be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the peſtilence that walketh in darkneſs. A thouſand ſhall fall at thy ſide, and ten thouſand at thy right-hand, but it ſhall not come nigh thee. Becauſe thou haſt made the moſt High thy habitation, there ſhall no evil befal thee, neither ſhall any plague come nigh thy dwelling: For he will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*

Are

Are you weary and heavy laden with your ſins? *Come unto me,* ſays Chriſt, *and I will give you reſt.* He aſks you "Believeſt thou that I am able to do this?" If you are crying out, "Lord, I believe —help thou mine unbelief," according to your faith it ſhall be unto you—the times of refreſhing will come from the preſence of the Lord.

Are you perſecuted for righteouſneſs-ſake? Believe that *Man of ſorrows* who has ſaid, *Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſly for my ſake—rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.*

Are you aſſaulted with doubts and fears? Then caſt your burthen upon the Lord, and he will ſuſtain you—he will never ſuffer the righteous to be moved. You ſhall yet be enabled to ſay with David, "The Lord is my rock, my fortreſs, and deliverer—The Lord is my ſhield, and the horn of my ſalvation, my tower, my refuge, and my Saviour." Wait, then, on the Lord, and be of good courage, and he will ſtrengthen your heart —Yea, I ſay, wait on the Lord.

Are you in heavineſs, thro' manifold temptations? Sometimes there is a neceſſity for it—But, *bleſſed is the man,* (ſays St. James) *that endureth temptation; for, when he is tried, he ſhall receive a crown of life.* Believe therefore, in the Lord, and he will, according to his promiſe, make a way for your eſcape, and ſhortly bruiſe Satan under your feet.

Are you praying for clean hands, and a pure heart? Be ſure to aſk in faith, nothing wavering. All things are poſſible to them that believe—*Behold,* ſays Chriſt, *I make all things new.* Oh let

your

your ſoul, ſtrong in faith, now cry out, "Amen —ſo be it, Lord Jeſus."

In fine, whatever your wants are, lay them open before the Lord—make your requeſts known unto him—Delight yourſelf in him, and he will give you the deſires of your heart. He is a ſtrong-hold in the day of trouble. Commit, then, your every cauſe, your every care unto him; for, he ſhall be kept in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed upon the Lord.

SERMON III.

HEBREWS xi. 1.

Faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for—the evidence of things not ſeen.

WHEN St. Paul was converted by the grace of God, and empowered by the Lord Jeſus (the Biſhop of ſouls, and only head of his church) to preach the everlaſting goſpel, the tenor of his commiſſion ran thus—"I *now* ſend thee unto the Gentiles, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive *forgiveneſs of ſins*, and inheritance among them which are ſanctified by *faith* that is in me." Hence we may obſerve that the very intent of all preaching is to diſcover unto man that ſpiritual blindneſs, which, by nature, is ſpread over all his intellectual faculties, and, like a veil, intercepts the light of God's countenance, preventing the benighted ſoul from the communications of his holy Spirit: And, after this darkneſs is made manifeſt, to direct the humbled ſinners unto the Sun of righteouſneſs, who alone is able to open the eyes of their underſtanding, to bring them out of obſcurity into the marvellous light of his goſpel, to turn them from the dominion and ſervice of the devil, unto the ſervice of the living God, by blotting out their paſt tranſgreſſions, adopting them into his family, and giving them a title to an everlaſting inheritance

with

with those that have obtained like precious faith in Christ, which is the instrumental cause of all our blessings.

Accordingly, wherever this great apostle thus promulged the glad tidings of salvation, his speech was accompanied with the quickening energy of the spirit of God. The gospel came unto the hearers, *not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.*

Whence, then, comes it to pass, that so many of those who pretend to be his successors, are but as sounding brass, or tinkling cymbals, in their respective congregations? What is the reason that after reading their harangues for a long series of years, they see no fruit of their ministry—no sinners converted unto God, and holiness? Why, my brethren, they do err, not knowing the scriptures, neither the power of God. *If they had stood in my counsel* (says he) *and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.* Jer. 23. 22. Because they preach *themselves*, and not *Christ Jesus the Lord*—because they do not exhort their audience to seek for a *present, immediate* remission of their sins, thro' faith which is in Christ, their word is as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up.

Without faith, says Paul, *it is impossible to please God*—and *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* But he justly asks, *How shall* the people *believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent*, not of man, but of God? *As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.* Rom. 10. 14,

If miniſters preach juſtification by the deeds of the law—if they declare not that man, by nature, is in a ſtate of enmity againſt God, and that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is our only Mediator, by a living faith in whom we may be reconciled unto God, and filled with that "peace which paſſeth all underſtanding," they are not preachers of the *goſpel of peace*—they are not meſſengers of *good things*. It is, therefore, highly incumbent upon all, both teachers and hearers, to examine themſelves whether they be in *the faith*, "and that not lightly, after the manner of diſſemblers with God."

Numbers there are in the world who have learned their creed by rote, and can repeat it with great volubility; but, ſo far from being influenced by it, they have not even an accurate comprehenſion of its ſeveral articles. Both young and old can readily ſay, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jeſus Chriſt his Son, our Lord—I believe in the Holy Ghoſt, and in the forgiveneſs of ſins:" But if they are *aſked a reaſon of the hope that is in them*, the adult parent is equally at a loſs for a reply with his liſping child, and can give no *rational*, much leſs *ſcriptural*, account of his faith. If required to expreſs himſelf in words different from the form, which, like a parrot, he has been taught, thick clouds and darkneſs reſt upon him, and the queriſt himſelf is left to anſwer his own interrogatories. Yet the old ſinner will be highly offended, if he is told that he never yet believed on Chriſt. But, whether he will bear it or not, I do not ſcruple to declare, that he is not only devoid of the genuine faith of a *chriſtian*, but that he has not even the ideal faith which he ſuppoſes.

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Is it poſſible that a man would wilfully continue in a courſe of rebellion againſt God, if he really believed that *God will wound the hairy ſcalp of ſuch a one as goeth on ſtill in his treſpaſſes?* When 'tis recorded in the book of God, that *upon the wicked he will rain ſnares, fire and brimſtone, and an horrible tempeſt,* and that *this ſhall be the portion of their cup,* if he ſincerely credited theſe denunciations of wrath, would he not immediately confeſs and forſake his ſins, and deprecate the fury of his angry Judge? While, therefore, he ſtill allows himſelf in habitual violations of the law of God, it is clearly evident there is no fear of God before his eyes, and that he is blinded by the devil to hope that God will make himſelf a liar, by not fulfilling his word.

But, ſuppoſing that he firmly believed all that is revealed in the holy ſcriptures, yet what will a *notional, barren faith* avail? Surely, the mere profeſſion of the moſt orthodox creed can never entitle him to the leaſt ſhare of ſpiritual, or eternal bleſſedneſs: Nay, if he be not actuated by the ſpirit of the goſpel, his right opinions, inſtead of ſaving him, will only help to enhance his future miſery. If he acts againſt light and knowledge, the leſs excuſable he is; and the greater, certainly, will be his condemnation: For, *to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is ſin.* James 4. 17.

In order, therefore, to conſtitute him a *true believer,* it is not ſufficient that he acknowledges the incarnation of Chriſt, his ſuffering under Pontius Pilate, his crucifixion, death and burial, his reſurrection, aſcenſion, and glorification at the right hand of God, from whence he ſhall come to judge the quick and dead. An aſſent of the

mind to these truths, the damned spirits give as well as he. *Thou believest* (says St. James, 2. 19.) *that there is one God—thou dost well—but*, adds he, *the devils also believe and tremble.* Now, perhaps, their faith exceeds that of the *nominal* christian I have been describing, who has never yet *trembled* for fear of the just judgments of God, which are impending over his devoted head. Or if at any time he has felt compunction of heart, and has trembled, for a few moments, like Felix, when Paul reasoned with him concerning righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, yet he has silenced his convicting conscience, as this heathen prince did the apostle, saying, *Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.* While, therefore, O sinner, you are working unrighteousness, and putting off your amendment from day to day, you give the plainest demonstration that you have neither true faith in Christ, nor in his word which condemns you.

Though the word *Faith* bears various meanings in the scriptures, and is used in different senses, yet, by most enlightened divines, it is distinguished into four kinds; namely the *faith of miracles*, *historical*, *temporary*, and *justifying faith*, which are thus explained by that learned man, *Alexander Cruden*.

I. "The *faith of miracles* is a firm assent of the "mind to some particular promise concerning any "miraculous event, which, if performed by us, "is called an *active miraculous faith*; of which our "Saviour and the apostle Paul speak, Mat. 17. "20.—1 Cor. 13. 2. But if it be wrought upon "us, it is called a *passive miraculous faith*: Thus "the lame man at Lystra had a firm persuasion "that Paul and Barnabas were able to cure him. "Acts 14. 9.

II. "*His-*

II. " *Hiſtorical faith* is a ſpeculative knowledge " of, and bare aſſent to the truths revealed in the " ſcriptures. Of this kind of faith the apoſtle " James ſpeaks, 2. 17, 24. *Faith, if it have not* " *works, is dead. Ye ſee how that by works a man* " *is juſtified, and not by faith only*; that is, not " by a mere profeſſion of faith, or a bare aſſent to " the truth, without good works, which proceed " from *faith*, and ſhew it to be of the right kind. " This kind of faith the devils themſelves have. " They are fully perſuaded that there is a God, " and that Chriſt is the Son of God, and ſhall be " their judge, as they acknowledge. Mat. 8. 29.

III. " *Temporary faith*, together with the know- " ledge of, and aſſent to revealed truths, has like- " wiſe in it, an approbation of, and joy in hear- " ing and receiving theſe truths; but this joy a- " riſing from ſome *ſelfiſh* conſideration, ſoon " vaniſhes, and comes to nothing. Of this kind " of faith our Saviour ſpeaks in the parable of the " ſower, Mat. 13. 21. *He that received the ſeed* " *into ſtony places, receives it with joy*—he under- " ſtands it, aſſents to it, hears it gladly, conſiders, " and approves of it; and it ſprings up in an " outward profeſſion and reformation: *Yet hath* " *he not root in himſelf, but endureth for a while* " —he has no ſufficient or conſiderable root, be- " cauſe it wants the ſoil of a ſincere heart, " and true affections, firm and fixed reſolutions, " and habitual diſpoſitions of grace. He has " ſome good purpoſes, and deſires; but they are " ſoon overpowered by unmortified corruption, " and the force of a temptation: For, *when tri-* " *bulation or perſecution ariſeth, becauſe of the* " *word, by and by he is offended*—he ſtumbles, and

" falls

" falls off from all his former profeſſions of reli-
" gion.

IV. " *Juſtifying faith* is a ſaving grace wrought
" in the ſoul by the ſpirit of God, whereby we
" receive Chriſt as he is revealed in the goſpel,
" to be our Prophet, Prieſt, and King—truſt in,
" and rely upon him and his righteouſneſs alone,
" for juſtification and ſalvation. This faith be-
" gets a ſincere obedience in the life and conver-
" ſation: And it aſſures us of the reality and
" worth of eternal, inviſible things, producing a
" ſatisfaction and aſſured confidence, that God
" will infallibly perform what he has promiſed,
" whereby the *believer* is as confident of them, as
" if they were before his eyes, and in his actual
" poſſeſſion."

Now this is the *faith* which the apoſtle menti-
ons in the text; and is therefore defined to be *the ſubſtance of things hoped for—the evidence of things not ſeen.*

Aſk either the brutal drunkard, or profane ſwearer, " If you were to die now, where do you think you'd go?" Each of them will have an an-
ſwer ready for you, " I hope to heaven." But on what is *their* hope founded? Surely, not on the word of God, for *that* poſitively affirms, *every man who hath this hope in him* (of ſeeing Chriſt as he is) *purifieth himſelf even as he* (Chriſt) *is pure*: 1 John 3. 3. And that *no drunkard, or blaſphemer, ſhall ever enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Has not, then, a deceived heart turned them aſide? If they acknowledge the ſcriptures true, they can-
not have the leaſt expectation of mercy or ſalvati-
on. The law which they have broken denounces nothing but *indignation and wrath* againſt them—*tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that*

doth

doth evil. Rom. 2. 8. But a *chriſtian*, on the other hand, will not be ſatisfied with an *uncertain* hope. No child of God is left to grope in the dark, like a blind man for the wall, not knowing whither he is going, to heaven or to hell. Therefore, on hearing theſe words of Chriſt, *I am the light of the world—he that followeth me ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life*, he prays for *faith* to lay hold on this precious promiſe, and his Saviour fills his heart with all *joy and peace in believing*. He obtains ſuch a certain knowledge of his intereſt in Chriſt, and of that future bliſs which is reſerved in heaven for him, that *his* hope (to diſtinguiſh it from that of the hypocrite, which *ſhall periſh*) is ſtyled in ſcripture, *the full aſſurance of hope*—a *bleſſed*, and a *lively hope*. In like manner, his faith is called *ſound, unfeigned faith—the faith of the goſpel—precious* and *moſt holy faith—the faith of God's elect—the faith once delivered to the ſaints—the faith thro' which we are ſaved—the full aſſurance of faith—the faith which is of the operation of God—the faith which juſtifieth the ungodly, overcometh the world, worketh by love, and purifieth the heart.* Becauſe, alſo, *the natural man* is a ſtranger to it, it is termed *the myſtery of faith*. From theſe ſeveral characteriſtics, we may ſee the propriety of St. Paul's definition, *Faith is the ſubſtance* (or, ſubſiſtence) *of things hoped for.* 'Tis a *ſubſtantial*, ſolid, real grace, not like the imaginary faith of the wicked, which may be fitly compared to a *ſhadow*: And the happy poſſeſſor of it has ſuch a ſtrong expectation of the glories of heaven, that they may be ſaid to *ſubſiſt* in his ſoul; for, as ſome author obſerves, "grace is glory begun." *It is the evidence of things not ſeen.* It produces in the mind of the believer ſuch an internal

ternal conviction that the beatitude of the invisible world shall be his everlasting portion, as leaves no manner of doubt: Justly, therefore may it be called an *Evidence*, which gives an infallible testimony of the goodness of our heavenly Father towards us. Hence these words of St. Paul, *We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.* Rom. 8. 15, &c. Hence, also, he observes again, *We have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, which is the earnest of our future inheritance.* Therefore, *because God hath given unto us this earnest, we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord—we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* 2 Cor. 5. 8. How clear and satisfactory is the account which he gives us of his own experience! *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live—yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the* FAITH *of the Son of God, who loved* ME, *and gave himself for* ME. Gal. 2. 20. By *faith*, he appropriated the merits of the Lord Jesus in such a manner, that he was inwardly convinced Christ had shed his blood for *him*, and redeemed *him*, as if there was not another creature upon the face of the earth. *I know*, adds he, *whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day* of his second coming. 2 Tim. 1. 12. And, when the time of his departure was at hand, he cried out, in all the exultation of a triumphant conqueror, *I have fought a good fight—I have finished*

my

my courſe—I have kept the faith—henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhall give me at the day of his appearing and glory. 2 Tim. 4. 7. The ſame divine perſuaſion enabled pious Job, under a much darker diſpenſation, to exclaim, *I* KNOW *that* MY *Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my ſkin worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God, whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not another.* Job 19. 25, &c. And wherefore did he thus expreſs himſelf? Becauſe he experienced that *faith* which one of our Homilies thus explains—"It is a *ſure truſt* and *confidence* which a man hath in God, that, for Chriſt's ſake, his ſins *are* forgiven him, and he reconciled to the favour of God."

Indeed, to this comfortable doctrine give all the prophets and apoſtles witneſs, that *thro' the name of Chriſt, whoſoever believeth in him ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins*, and the knowledge of that great ſalvation. Acts 10. 43. In ſuch a forcible manner does St. John eſtabliſh it, that it is aſtoniſhing how the world can be ſo ſlow of heart to believe. *If we receive the witneſs of men, the witneſs of God is greater*—is much more worthy of acceptation. *Now this is the witneſs which God hath teſtified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witneſs in himſelf*—is firmly perſuaded that his faith is genuine, and that he is thereby juſtified, or at peace with God. *But he that believeth not God*, according to this important declaration, *hath made God a liar, becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son*, which is, *that God hath given to us*, who truly believe, *eternal life.* The apoſtle does not ſay, *ſhall* give it, but that he

hath

hath now given it, an earneſt of it, a title to it, an antepaſt of joys to come. Therefore, adds he, *theſe things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may* KNOW, or be aſſured, *that ye* HAVE *eternal life*: And then he farther aſſerts, *We* KNOW *that we are of God, but the whole world*, the majority of mankind, *lieth in wickedneſs. We* KNOW *that the Son of God is come* into our hearts, *and hath given us an underſtanding that we may* KNOW *him that is true (whom to know is life eternal) and we are in him that is true, even in Jeſus Chriſt. Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be, but we* KNOW *that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is. We* KNOW *that we have paſſed from death unto life. We* KNOW *that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him. Hereby we* KNOW *that he abideth in us, and that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit.* 1 John 5. 19—3. 2, 14, 19, 24.—4. 13. What then is the concluſion of the whole matter? *He that* HATH *the Son* thus dwelling in him by faith, HATH *life; and he that hath not the Son of God* formed in his heart, the hope of glory, *hath not life.* 5. 12.—Let none that profeſs themſelves members of the church of England count me an *enthuſiaſt* for thus inſiſting on this vital union between Chriſt and his people as eſſentially neceſſary to ſalvation; for, not only the word of God makes it evident, but the ſervice of their own church. The miniſter when repeating the exhortation preceding the celebration of the communion, declares that "if with a true penitent heart and lively faith the communicants receive the holy Sacrament, then they ſpiritually eat the fleſh of Chriſt, and drink his blood,

blood, then they dwell in Chriſt, and Chriſt in them—they are one with Chriſt, and Chriſt with them."

All the ſaints under the Old Teſtament, enjoyed the ſame fellowſhip with God, by faith in Chriſt, who was that ſpiritual rock that followed them, and of which they all drank. 1 Cor. 10. 4. *By faith*, ſays St. Paul, *the elders obtained a good report:* Thereby *Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain.* Here we find two brothers appearing before the Lord, in order to pay him religious homage: Yet there was ſuch a material difference between them, that *God had reſpect unto Abel, and to his offering, but unto Cain he had not reſpect.* Is there, then, injuſtice with God? Is he a reſpecter of perſons? No verily—but we may gather hence, that all who come to worſhip God muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth; otherwiſe, God will not accept either themſelves, or their vain oblations. Our Saviour happening to introduce *Abel* into one of his diſcourſes, calls him *righteous Abel*; and St. John ſays, that *Cain was of the wicked one*; therefore, the pure and holy God juſtly rejected him, and his ſervice: And when Cain *was very wroth*, God condeſcended to reaſon with him, that he might be convinced of the juſtice of the divine procedure—"Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doſt not well, ſin lieth at the door." Gen. 4. 6. But what made the chief diſtinction between them, was, that Cain *brought an offering of the fruit of the ground*, whereby he only acknowledged God as the *Creator* of the world, without having any view towards him, as the *Redeemer* of mankind, thro' his Son, Chriſt Jeſus.

Whereas Abel's offering was not only of the *euchariſtic*, but alſo of the *expiatory* kind: *He brought of the firſtlings of his flock*; thereby expreſſing the ſenſe he had of his ſinfulneſs, and his expectation of pardon and mercy, thro' faith in that Meſſiah, who was to be wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities. Therefore, *he obtained witneſs that he was righteous, God teſtifying of his gifts*; probably by ſending down fire (an emblem of his juſtice) to burn up the ſacrifice: Thus denoting that his wrath was appeaſed, being transferred to the victim, and that Abel was juſtified, or accepted as righteous, becauſe he believed in the ſacrificial blood of the Lamb, upon whom the iniquities of us all were laid. And by this faith (adds the apoſtle) *he being dead, yet ſpeaketh*—teacheth us this inſtructive leſſon, that *by grace we are ſaved thro' faith.*

By the ſame faith, Enoch, alſo, *walked with God*—was enabled to live according to the will and word of God: And therefore *he was tranſlated, that he ſhould not ſee death*—was removed from this vale of tears, without ſuffering any dying pangs; as thoſe ſaints will be, who, at the coming of their Lord to judgment, *ſhall be found alive: They ſhall be caught up to meet him in the air, together with the dead in Chriſt.* But BEFORE *his tranſlation, he had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God*—he knew that his perſon, and his works, were acceptable to God. His rejoicing was this, the teſtimony of his conſcience, that in ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, he had his converſation in this world, 2 Cor. 1. 12.

In the life of *Moſes*, we find many eminent diſplays of active faith. Thro' the power of this grace,

grace, *when he came to years*, when he arrived at ſuch a mature age as qualified him for forming a right eſtimate of things, *he refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter*. Though, in all human probability, he would have ſucceeded to the imperial throne, yet being a *king and prieſt unto God*, he looked down with contempt on all the honours of an earthly crown, and *choſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon*. All ſublunary delights, and emoluments, being momentary and ſhort-lived, he preferred ſuffering with thoſe who had obtained like precious faith with him, KNOWING IN HIMSELF *that he had in heaven a better, and an enduring ſubſtance*. Yea, *he eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures in Egypt; for he had reſpect unto the recompence of the reward*. He gloried in all the perſecutions, and tribulations, which either men or devils could impoſe upon him; like our divine Fore-runner, who, for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame.

At the command of God, alſo, he ordered all the elders of Iſrael to kill the paſchal lamb (a moſt ſignificant type of Chriſt) and, dipping a bunch of hyſſop in the blood, to ſprinkle the lintel and ſide-poſts of their doors, that the angel who was to deſtroy all the firſt-born among the *Egyptians*, might paſs over the houſes of the *Iſraelites*: And believing that God was able to deliver him from the hands of his enemies, *he forſook Egypt not fearing the wrath of the king*, who he had reaſon to believe would purſue him with an armed hoſt; and afterwards undauntedly led his people through the Red-ſea, as if it were dry land. Thus did he cheerfully undergo a variety of trials, *as ſeeing him*,

thro' the perſpective glaſs of faith, *who is inviſible* to mortal eyes.

"What ſhall I more ſay? The time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Baruch, and of Samſon, and of Jephthæ; of David alſo, and Samuel, and of the prophets. Theſe, thro' *faith*, ſubdued kingdoms, wrought righteouſneſs, obtained promiſes, ſtopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, eſcaped the edge of the ſword, out of weakneſs were made ſtrong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women, alſo, received their dead raiſed to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better reſurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and ſcourgings, yea moreover, of bonds and impriſonment—They were ſtoned—they were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the ſword—they wandered about in ſheep-ſkins and goat-ſkins, in deſarts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented." Heb. 11. 32, &c. As all theſe ancient worthies lived by faith, ſo they died in it—they continued ſtedfaſt unto death. Tho' they *had not received the promiſes, yet having ſeen them afar off, they were perſuaded of them, and embraced them, and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth.* Though they were not, during their lives, in actual poſſeſſion of the promiſed reſt, yet, like Abraham, the father of the faithful, they *ſaw the day of Chriſt, and were glad.* Notwithſtanding *the times propheſied of were far off*, they were confident that the *Faithful Witneſs* would accompliſh whatever he had ſaid, and would bring them to a ſtate of bliſs, where the wicked ſhould ceaſe from troubling: Therefore, they acknowledged

knowledged that this world was not their place, but that they were citizens of a *better country, namely, an heavenly*, and travellers towards that *city*, which God (who *is not ashamed to be called* THEIR *God*) *hath prepared for them.* The authors of our Homilies observe, "that these fathers, mar-"tyrs, and holy men did not only know God to "be the Lord, Maker, and Governor of all men, "but having their faith surely fixed in God, when "all the world was against them, they had, also "a special confidence and trust, that he was and "would be their God, their comforter, helper, "maintainer, and defender." Therefore, they both laboured, and suffered reproach, because they trusted in the living God.

Now these things, my beloved, are written that ye might believe, and that, believing, ye might have life, spiritual and eternal, thro' the saving and adorable name of Jesus. Let me, then, ask each of you, as Christ did the blind man whose sight he restored, *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* Weigh well the question, and do not rashly determine. Narrowly examine on what foundation you are building for eternity; for, it is a matter of the utmost importance to know whether you are interested in the blood of the covenant, or not. *He that believeth on Christ is not condemned; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, for the wrath of God abideth on him.* John 3. 18, 36.

As there is but *one Lord*, and *one baptism* (the baptism of the Holy Ghost) so there is but *one faith* that will be of any avail, with regard to our eternal salvation. Eph. 4. 5. Have you, then, *that* faith, whereby you know you are accepted, and reconciled unto God, thro' his beloved Son? And have you that *joy* and *peace*, which is the immedi-

ate, and neceſſary reſult of it? When the Ethiopian eunuch *believed, he went on his way rejoicing*: And, ſays St. Paul to the Epheſians (1. 13.) *after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with the holy Spirit of promiſe.* To the Romans, alſo, he writes thus, *Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Rom. 5. 1. Again it is written, *He that believeth on me, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water.* Now *this ſpake he of the Spirit* (ſays the Evangeliſt) *which they that believe on him ſhould receive.* John 7. 38. If, then, you profeſs to have faith in Chriſt, be not ſtartled if I aſk you, as St. Paul did certain diſciples at Epheſus, *Have you received the Holy Ghoſt ſince you believed?* Perhaps you may give me the ſame anſwer which they did, *I have not ſo much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghoſt.* Then let me tell you plainly, you are an *unbeliever*, and ſhall have your portion with *the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and ſorcerers, and idolaters, and liars, in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone.* Rev. 21. 8. Your faith is mere infidelity —it *ſtands in the wiſdom of men, not in the power of God*: And your *chriſtianity* is only a refined name for *paganiſm.* Flatter not yourſelf that you believe in Chriſt, becauſe you can gabble over your creed as faſt as a Papiſt counts his beads, or becauſe you concede to its ſeveral articles. If you are a member of the church of England, how readeſt thou in the Homilies, appointed to be read in churches, ſo called? "There is one faith "which in ſcripture is called a dead faith, which "bringeth forth no good works, but is idle, bar"ren, and unfruitful. And this faith, by the "holy apoſtle St. James, is compared to the "faith of devils, who believe God to be true and

"juſt,

" juſt, and tremble for fear; yet they do nothing
" well, but all evil. Such a manner of faith have
" the wicked and naughty chriſtian people, who
" confeſs God in their mouths, but deny him in
" their deeds, being abominable, and to all good
" works reprobate. This faith is a perſuaſion
" and belief in man's heart, whereby he knoweth
" that there is a God, and agreeth unto all truths
" of God's moſt holy word; ſo that it conſiſteth
" only in believing that the word of God is true.
" Now this is not properly called faith: For,
" though he that readeth Cæſar's Commentaries,
" believing the ſame to be true, hath thereby a
" knowledge of Cæſar's life, and notable acts, be-
" cauſe he believeth the hiſtory of Cæſar, yet it
" cannot be properly ſaid that he believeth in
" Cæſar, of whom he looketh for no help nor
" benefit. Even ſo, he that believeth all that is
" ſpoken of God in the Bible is true, and yet liv-
" eth ſo ungodly, that he cannot look to enjoy the
" promiſes and benefits of God; although it may
" be ſaid, that ſuch a man hath a faith and belief
" in the words of God, yet it cannot properly be
" ſaid that he believeth in God, or hath ſuch a
" faith and truſt in God, whereby he may ſurely
" look for grace, mercy, and everlaſting life at
" God's hand, but rather for indignation and pun-
" iſhment, according to the merits of his wicked
" life. Foraſmuch as faith without works is dead,
" it is not now faith, as a dead man is not a man.
" This dead faith, therefore, is not that ſure and
" ſubſtantial faith which ſaveth ſinners.

" Another faith there is in ſcripture which is
" not idle, unfruitful, and dead, but worketh by
" love; which, as the other vain faith is called a
" dead faith, ſo may this be called a quick or

" lively

"lively faith. And this is not only the common "belief of the articles of our faith, but it is alſo "a true truſt and confidence of the mercy of God, "through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and a ſtedfaſt "hope of all good things to be received at God's "hand. It is the ſure ground and foundation of "the benefits which we ought to look for, and "truſt to receive of God—a certificate and ſure "looking for them, although they yet ſenſibly ap-"pear not unto us. And this faith hath always "charity joined unto it, and is fruitful, and "bringeth forth all good works. It is not in the "mouth and outward profeſſion only, but it liv-"eth, and ſtirreth inwardly in the heart."

Now this living principle, or grace, you can no more work in yourſelf, than you can create a new world. We are poſitively informed in Paul's Epiſtle to the Epheſians (2. 8.) it *is the gift of God*: And when writing to the Philippians, he ſays, *Unto you it is* GIVEN *to believe on Chriſt*, who, accordingly, is ſtyled *the author and finiſher of our faith*. It is, alſo, by the enlightening influence of the ſpirit of God, that you muſt be brought to ſee your want of faith. *When the Spirit of truth ſhall come* (ſays Chriſt) *he ſhall reprove the world of ſin, becauſe they believe not on me*. John 16. 8. And oh, how fatal will be the conſequence of your unbelief! Thereby all the bleſſings of the new and everlaſting covenant—all the precious benefits ariſing from Chriſt's obedience, from his agony and bloody ſweat, from his croſs and paſſion, from his glorious reſurrection and aſcenſion, are rendered totally abortive; as the unbelief of the Jews in the country where our Saviour was born, diſqualified them from deriving any advantage from that miraculous power which he ſo beneficially exerted in

many

many other places. A moſt efficacious medicine may be prepared for our bodily diſorders; yet if it be not applied, its virtue is utterly ineffectual. Thus, tho' Chriſt hath laid down his life for us, and is *the Balm of Gilead* to heal all our ſpiritual maladies, yet if the ſalutary reſtorative be not applied, by the hand of faith, to our diſtempered ſouls, we muſt eternally periſh.

Be aſſured, then, that if Chriſt dwelleth not in your heart by faith, you are yet in your ſins, and if you obtain not a ſpeedy application of the blood of Chriſt (that ſovereign remedy prepared for you) to cleanſe you from all unrighteouſneſs, you will be undone for ever. An outward profeſſion of faith will be of no ſignificance; for, *in Chriſt Jeſus, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but faith which worketh by love.* Gal. 5. 06.

He then, that cometh to God muſt not only believe that he is, that he exiſts, and governs the world, but that *he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him:* And when *with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation.* Rom. 10. 10. If, therefore, the merciful God had forgiven you your treſpaſſes, you would ſay with David, when the Lord *healed his back-ſlidings*, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my ſoul. The ſorrows of death compaſſed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and ſorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord, O Lord, I beſeech thee, deliver my ſoul; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. I was brought low, and he helped me. He brought me up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſhed

bliſhed my goings: And he hath put a new ſong in my mouth, even praiſe unto our God." If you had thus *taſted that the Lord was gracious*, you would ſay to the miniſter, who was the inſtrument of your converſion, as ſome Samaritans ſaid to the woman who told them of her converſation with Chriſt, *Now I believe, not becauſe of thy ſaying, but I have heard him myſelf and* KNOW *that this is indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world.* John 4. 42. Then you would cry out with convinced Job, *I have heard of thee, O Lord, by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye ſeeth thee.* Job 42. 5.

Reader, is your judgment yet informed? Are you yet perſuaded that theſe things are ſo? If you are, while exerciſing your *hiſtorical faith*, the Lord, who is rich in mercy unto all that call upon him, will give you *juſtifying faith.* Are you crying out from the ground of a contrite and penitent heart, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief*, according to your faith it ſhall be unto you. The Father of glory will give unto you the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your underſtanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and the exceeding greatneſs of his power to them who *believe.*

When Jeſus came to his diſciples after his reſurrection, he ſaid, *Peace be unto you—receive ye the Holy Ghoſt.* And is his arm ſhortened that it cannot ſave? No truly—he has ſtill all power on earth to forgive ſins, and he daily manifeſts that power. Though he does not orally pronounce them forgiven, yet he ſpeaks by the ſmall ſtill voice of his Spirit. *Thine ears* (ſays Iſaiah, 30. 21.) ſhall *hear a word behind thee, ſaying, this is the way,*

way, walk thou in it. A cloud of witneſſes are ready to teſtify that the Lord has *blotted out their tranſgreſſions*; and while they are declaring with thoſe of old, *We have ſeen the Lord* (with the eye of faith) are you objecting, and ſaying, *Except I put my finger into the print of the nails, and thruſt my hand into his ſide, I will not believe.* Indeed, thy hardneſs of heart might juſtly provoke the Holy-One of Iſrael to ſhut up his loving-kindneſs in diſpleaſure: But he is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh. He waiteth to be gracious; and, therefore, is now drawing nigh unto thee, infidel as thou art. Let thine inmoſt ſoul be attentive to his word. Say—Is not an internal voice now whiſpering unto thee, *Reach hither thine hand, and thruſt it into my ſide—be not faithleſs, but believing?* Now, ſinner, now graſp the favourable opportunity—dare to believe, and you ſhall *call Jeſus Lord by the Holy Ghoſt*, and be enabled to ſay with doubting Thomas, MY *Lord, and* MY *God.* So be it, Father of mercies, Amen!

SER-

SERMON IV.

1. CORINTHIANS XV. 22.

As in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.

IN the beginning of time, when the earth was without form and void, *the everlaſting Father* ſpoke, and it was made, from the chaotic maſs—darkneſs was upon the face of the deep—The *Spirit* of God moved upon it—"Let there be light," (ſaid the ſelf-exiſtent *Word which was with God*) and there was light. Again he uttered forth his voice—And lo! the firmament expanded itſelf, in the form of an arched canopy, over this terreſtrial globe. The waters were gathered together, and the dry land appeared. Its pregnant womb brought forth abundantly graſs, and herbs, and trees. At his irreſiſtible fiat, two great lights, reſplendent ſhone, to rule, in reciprocal ſucceſſion the day and night; while the glittering ſtars ſhed forth their luſtre alſo. With ponderous whales, and other living creatures, the waters teemed; and winged fowls were ſeen to fly beneath the circumambient æther. From the prolific ground aſcended beaſts, and cattle, and creeping things. Then, to complete the wonders of creation, out of the duſt God formed *man*—the breath of life being breathed into his noſtrils, he became a living ſoul.

Though the heavens declared the glory of God, and the firmament ſhewed his handy work, yet

man

man might juſtly be eſteemed the maſter-piece of the univerſal Architect: His frame, ſo fearfully and wonderfully made, diſplayed the higheſt powers of celeſtial workmanſhip. But who can tell the infinite perfections of his ſoul! Oh what a glorious being! Created in *the likeneſs*, in the very moral *image of God* himſelf, how tranſcendent muſt all his faculties have been! Even the ſupreme Lord of all things was pleaſed to look with complacency on the operations of his hands, and to pronounce that all which he had made was *very good*.

But, as *man* was ſo highly diſtinguiſhed with regard to his intellectual powers, God gave him dominion over every living thing that moved in air, in earth, or ſea, and planted, for his reſidence, a delightful garden, in which grew every tree that was pleaſant to the ſight, and good for food; being watered, alſo, by a river, which flowed thro' a land covered with gold, and precious ſtones. No doubt, the whole univerſe contributed to furniſh its appointed ſovereign with every thing that could regale his various ſenſes. But, in order to try his gratitude and obedience, a ſtrict command was given him by God, "not to eat of the tree of knowledge which was in the midſt of the garden," inforced, likewiſe, with this threatning, "In the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die."

Now the ſerpent, being the moſt ſubtil of all the beaſts, by flattering the woman (made for an help meet for man) with pleaſing hopes, that they ſhould be as Gods knowing good and evil, prevailed on her to taſte of the forbidden fruit, which ſhe then preſented to her huſband, and he did eat—— O fatal tranſgreſſion! O wretched Eve! O thankleſs, unfortunate Adam! What heights of bliſs did

ye then forfeit! Into what depths of misery did ye then plunge yourselves, and all your posterity! The writers of our Homilies observe, that immediately after their fall "it came to pass, as before "they were blessed, so now they were accursed "—as before they were loved, so now they were "abhorred—as before they were most beautiful "and precious, so now they were most vile and "wretched, in the sight of their Lord and Maker. "Instead of the image of God, they now became "the image of the devil—instead of the citizens of "heaven, they now became the bond slaves of "hell; having in themselves no one part of their "former purity and cleanness, but being altogether spotted, and defiled: Insomuch that now "they seemed to be nothing else but a lump of "sin, and therefore by the just judgment of God "they were condemned to everlasting death." Nay, they were themselves sensible of the change which passed upon their souls. When their spotless innocence was polluted, shame immediately succeeded—*they knew that they were naked*—disrobed of that glorious similitude which they first bore to their pure and holy Creator. The sense of their disobedience, also, filled their hearts with fear, a passion to which they were strangers before: So that instead of loving God for his unbounded mercies, they then dreaded his divine justice, and considered him no longer as a tender Father, but as an inexorable Judge. Nay, so darkened grew their understandings, that they lost sight of the essential attributes of God; and vainly imagined to hide themselves from his pervading presence amongst the trees of the garden. What brutal ignorance did this betray! As if they could secrete themselves from that unbodied spirit, whose eyes

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are ten thouſand times brighter than the ſun—with whom darkneſs is as light—and before whom hell itſelf is naked, and deſtruction hath no covering.

The apoſtate rebels being arraigned, with trembling they confeſſed their guilt: Upon which God ſaid unto the woman, "I will greatly multiply thy ſorrow and thy conception—In ſorrow ſhalt thou bring forth children, and thy deſire ſhall be unto thy huſband, and he ſhall rule over thee." And unto Adam he ſaid, "Curſed is the ground for thy ſake—In ſorrow ſhalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns, alſo, and thiſtles ſhall it bring forth to thee, and thou ſhalt eat the herb of the field. In the ſweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it waſt thou taken: Duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou return."

Therefore, leſt man ſhould eat of the tree of life, and live for ever, with a flaming ſword he was driven out by an angel, from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

Shortly after, he begat two ſons, and the evil nature of the parent ſoon diſcovered itſelf in the eldeſt. Horrid to tell! In his brother's blood he imbrued his impious hands—And to ſhew how Adam loſt his original reſemblance to the divine Eſſence, we are told that *he begat a ſon in his own likeneſs and image.* What was the neceſſary conſequence? As the fountain was corrupt, the ſtreams which flowed from it were corrupt alſo. For, *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing? Not one.* Therefore, in the ſucceeding generations, every ſpecies of iniquity broke out, like a ſpreading plague, infecting all the children of men, from the leaſt unto the greateſt. God ſaw (ſays the ſacred hiſtorian) that their wicked-

neſs was great in the earth, and that every imagination of their hearts was only evil continually. Therefore it repented him that he made man—it grieved him at his heart: And he determined to pour down his vengeance upon *the world of the ungodly.* Noah, who was a juſt man, and perfect, alone found grace in his eyes; ſo that being commanded to build an ark, and to take in his family, with two of every ſort of living things, God ſent rain upon the earth forty days, and forty nights, till the waters prevailed ſo exceedingly, that every living ſubſtance was deſtroyed which was upon the face of the ground.

Yet notwithſtanding this awful judgment, the depravity of human nature ſoon manifeſted itſelf in the children of that family, whom God had ſo miraculouſly preſerved from the deluge. As men multiplied upon the face of the earth, vice multiplied alſo, in a variety of horrid forms, and, from the firſt ages of the world, to this preſent time, man has retained a carnal mind which is enmity againſt God. Since the *fall*, he comes into life with a ſtrong propenſity to evil, and as ſtrong an antipathy to all manner of good. His nature is totally vitiated, and ſhews itſelf ſo, almoſt from the very inſtant of his exiſtence. Hence the ninth Article of the eſtabliſhed church maintains that "original ſin ſtandeth not in the following of A-"dam, but is the fault and corruption of the na-"ture of every man that naturally is engender-"ed of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is "very far gone from original righteouſneſs, and "is of his own nature inclined to evil, ſo that the "fleſh luſteth always contrary to the ſpirit; and "therefore in every perſon born into this world it "deſerveth God's wrath and damnation." The

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tenth Article, likewiſe, ſets forth the utter incapacity of man to remove this original defilement. "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is "ſuch, that he cannot turn and prepare himſelf "by his own natural ſtrength and good works, "to faith, and calling upon God: Wherefore we "have no power to do good works, pleaſant and "acceptable to God, without the grace of God "by Chriſt preventing us, that we may have a "good will, and working with us, when we have "that good will." With theſe axioms agrees the teſtimony of Eſdras, which is very explicit, with regard to the point I am endeavouring to eſtabliſh. "The firſt Adam, bearing an evil heart, tranſgreſſed and was overcome; and ſo be all they that are born of him. Thus infirmity was made permanent, and the law alſo in the heart of the people, with the malignant root; ſo that the good departed away, and the evil abode ſtill." 2 Eſdras 3. 21. Therefore, he again exclaims in this pathetic language, "O thou Adam, what haſt thou done? For though it was thou that ſinned, thou art not fallen alone, but we all that come of thee." 7. 48.

But we need not have recourſe to the apocryphal writers, as the great apoſtle of the Gentiles has ſet this matter beyond all diſpute. He affirms that *by one man's offence death reigned*, and *judgment came upon all men to condemnation*—that *by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners*—and ſtill further, that *by one man ſin entered into the world, and death*, ſpiritual, temporal, and eternal, *by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men*, without exception, *for that all have ſinned* in Adam, as the fœderal head, and common repreſentative of mankind, who were ſeminally repoſited in his loins.

We are not, however, to imagine, that any of his deſcendants ſhall be puniſhed on account of *his* ſin. No——we ſhall all ſuffer for our own perſonal tranſgreſſions. This point has been ſufficiently cleared up by God himſelf, who thus reproves the Jews. "What mean ye that ye uſe this proverb concerning the land of Iſrael, ſaying, The fathers have eaten ſour grapes, and the children's teeth are ſet on edge? As I live, ſaith the Lord God, ye ſhall not have occaſion any more to uſe this proverb in Iſrael. The ſon ſhall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither ſhall the father bear the iniquity of the ſon: But the righteouſneſs of the righteous ſhall be upon him, and the wickedneſs of the wicked ſhall be upon him." Ezek. 18. 2, 3, 20.——When, therefore, it is aſſerted that the ſentence of *death hath paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned* in Adam, the ſacred writers only mean, that mankind are born with an evil nature, whereby they are rendered dead to *the things of the ſpirit of God*, and muſt become a prey to the grave; and, except they be reſtored to a divine ſpiritual life, by that regenerating *grace which hath appeared unto* ALL *men*, and is freely offered them in the goſpel, they muſt die eternally. Is there, then, injuſtice with God? God forbid! As he has prepared an all-ſufficient Saviour for man, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhall not periſh, but ſhall have everlaſting life, if perverſe ſinners *will not come unto him that they may have life*, they are left without excuſe—they will juſtly periſh in the multitude of their iniquities, and God will be juſtified in his doings, and clear when he judgeth them, and is judged of them. Rom. 3. 4—Pſal. 51. 4.—

It is amazing that ſo many in the world will dare to affirm that "the ſoul of man is like a-ſheet of blank paper, capable of receiving either good or bad impreſſions." If this were the caſe, whence comes it to paſs, that none grow up from their childhood conſiſtently religious? Not a ſingle infant ever yet could be found, who from the very firſt dawnings of reaſon, did not betray (though in a leſſer degree) all the turbulent, diabolical paſſions which haraſs thoſe of riper years, while in an unconverted ſtate. Nay, ſo headſtrong and perverſe is the will of man, by nature, that it cannot be totally reſtrained by the moſt ſtrenuous efforts of godly parents, who endeavour to breed up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Neither the precepts, nor the example, of the moſt devoted ſervants of God, are ſufficient to check the wild career of *youthful luſts*, by which they ſee their thoughtleſs offspring daily hurried headlong: And I am convinced, that if an infant could be reared in the wilds of Arabia, where it would be excluded from the converſe and ſociety of men, it would be almoſt as ſavage as the beaſts of prey.

Certain it is, that the oracles of God repreſent man as in a fallen ſtate, utterly incapable of doing a good work, or even thinking a good thought, independent of the grace of God. Let then the advocates for the dignity of human nature be abaſhed at their proud boaſting, and keep ſilence hereafter, ſince the God of eternal truth thus ſpeaks—"I looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to ſee if there were any that did underſtand, and ſeek after God. But they are all gone aſide—they are altogether become filthy—there is none that doeth good, no, not one. The imaginati-

imaginations of their hearts are evil *from their youth*—they are eſtranged *from the womb*, and go aſtray *as ſoon as they are born*, ſpeaking lies, and drinking in iniquity, like water. Thro' the pride of their countenance, they will not ſeek God—God is not in all their thoughts—Like ſheep, they have all gone aſtray, turning every one to their own way. Pride compaſſeth them about as a chain, and violence covereth them as a garment. They are corrupt, and ſpeak wickedly. They ſet their mouth againſt the heavens, and their tongue walketh thro' the earth. They ſay unto God, depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we ſhould ſerve him? And what profit ſhould we have, if we pray unto him?

Now, whence can all this ungodlineſs, all theſe fruits of unrighteouſneſs ariſe? Muſt they not ſpring from that *root* within, *which beareth gall and wormwood*? *Out of the* unrenewed *heart*, ſays Chriſt, *proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, theſts, covetouſneſs, wickedneſs, deceit, laſciviouſneſs, an evil eye, pride, blaſphemy, fooliſhneſs.* Mark 7. 21. And though ſome men may outwardly appear leſs immoral than others, yet 'till grace ſubdues nature, *the beſt of them* (that is, of unregenerate men) *is as a briar, and the moſt upright is ſharper than a thorn hedge.*

From theſe ſeveral declarations of holy writ, and from that ſad experience which the practice of mankind affords us, we may aſk with Eliphaz, *What is man that he ſhould be clean, and he which is born of a woman that he ſhould be righteous?* And, after endeavouring in vain to account *particularly* for all the natural and moral evils which abound in the world, we may trace them up to their original

riginal ſpring, and draw the ſame *general* concluſion that Solomon did, *Lo! this only have I found, that God made man* (the firſt man Adam) *upright; but they* (his deſcendants) *have ſought out many inventions.* Eccleſ. 7. 29. While, alſo, David makes this mournful acknowledgment, *Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me*, we may take up the mortifying theme, and breathe forth from the ground of our hearts, what we formally repeat in our daily confeſſion, "There is no health in us." Nay, far from having any ſpiritual ſoundneſs, we are a maſs of corruption —*the whole head is ſick, and the whole heart is faint—we are full of wounds, and bruiſes, and putrifying ſores.*

Thus it appears, my brethren, that we are, by nature, *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.*

But this is not all—We are not only averſe to righteouſneſs, and prone to wickedneſs, thro' the tranſgreſſion of our fœderal progenitor, but we are ſubject to excruciating pains, loathſome diſeaſes, and the pangs of mortality: Our bodies are become corruptible, and muſt be *laid, like ſheep, in the* gloomy noiſome caverns of the *grave.* Hear and attend to this, *thou that art given to pleaſures, that dwelleſt careleſly, that ſayeſt in thine heart, I am and none elſe beſides me.* Lay theſe things to heart, and remember thy latter end. For though thou clotheſt thyſelf with crimſon, and deckeſt thee with ornaments of gold, in vain ſhalt thou make thyſelf fair. Though thou art preparing raiment as the clay, and arraying thyſelf with glory and beauty, yet thy beauty ſhall conſume away in the earth, thine excellency be brought down to the ſides of the pit, and worms ſhall cover thee, and worms ſhall be ſpread under thee. The duſt of

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the poor, alſo, whom thou haſt deſpiſed, ſhall mingle, perhaps, with thine; for the rich and poor meet together, in the houſe appointed for all living—the Lord is the Maker of them all.

Though thy bones be now as ſtrong as pieces of braſs, or like bars of iron, yet ſhall not all thy ſtrength be able to withſtand the arreſt of death. Thou ſhalt be weak as a ſucking child before him. He will break the cords of life, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire.

Though the earth has been filled with thy wiſdom—though by the magnetic influence of your eloquence, you drew the attention and admiration of liſtning multitudes, and brought on you the envy of your competitors, yet in the land where all things are forgotten, thou ſhalt be ſilent as the ſepulchral ſtatue, that is deſigned to point out the place where lies thy ſleeping duſt.

Though thou art now riſing up early, and late taking reſt, eating the bread of carefulneſs—though thou art greedy of gain, and art going after thy lovers, who give thee thy bread and thy water, thy wool and thy flax, thine oyl and thy drink, and art ſaying, My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth, yet in the quiet manſions of the dead, thy right hand ſhall forget its cunning, thine induſtry ceaſe, and thine eyes be for ever cloſed to all thou holdeſt dear on earth. Though thou haſt been heaping up ſilver as the duſt—though thy wealth be great, and thine hands have gotten thee much, yet as thou cameſt naked out of thy mother's womb, naked alſo ſhalt thou return hence—thou ſhalt carry nothing away with thee, neither ſhall thy glory deſcend after thee—thou ſhalt leave thy riches to others, without being even able to tell who ſhall gather them: And,

though,

though, in the ſun-ſhine of life, thou art making gold thine hope, and ſaying to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence, yet in the cloudy night of death, thou canſt by no means either redeem thyſelf, or thy brethren, or give unto God a ranſom, that ye ſhould ſtill live for ever, and not ſee corruption.

However thou mayeſt pride thyſelf in the excellency of thy nature above the brute creation, yet, know, "thou pompous ſon of reaſon idolized," that thou ſhalt ſhortly be put upon the ſame level with irrational beings, and die, like the beaſts that periſh. Yea, though thou art allied to kings and princes of the earth, and canſt trace back, for many centuries, thy noble anceſtry, yet, ſooner or later, thou muſt ſay to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my ſiſter. Creeping things ſhall be thy kindred, in the dreary tomb, and ſhall fare ſumptuouſly upon that body which is now clothed in purple and fine linen, and pampered up with ſo much care. Then this ſhall be thine epitaph,

How lov'd, how valu'd once, avails thee not—
To whom related, or by whom begot:
A heap of duſt alone remains of thee—
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud ſhall be."

POPE's Miſcel.

Yes—all that are of the earth ſhall turn to earth again; for all fleſh is graſs, and the glory of man as the flower of the field.

Hear this, all ye people—give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world, both low and high, rich and poor together: This is the ſentence of the Lord over all the fleſh.

But,

But, alas! the diſmal effects of Adam's apoſtacy end not here: For, there is another death in a future world, to which all who die in their ſins here muſt be inevitably condemned. St. John makes mention of it in the 21ſt chapter of the Revelation. *The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and ſorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, ſhall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone—which is the* SECOND DEATH. It is this ſecond death which makes the firſt ſo terrible, and arms it with all its ſtings and horrors. If their bodies were to lie for ever in the grave—if they were to ſink into utter annihilation, the wicked might have ſome reaſonable plea for their debauchery and exceſs. But as they have an immortal ſpirit, which is to remain after the diſſolution of its material tenement; and as they muſt again appear in the body before the awful Judge of quick and dead, to give an exact account of all the deeds done in this probationary ſtate, *wiſdom* cries aloud to them, to confeſs and forſake their iniquity, leſt it prove their everlaſting ruin. Becauſe they ſee not into futurity, nor know for a certainty what paſſes in the inviſible world of ſpirits, they are either in hopes, that there is no ſtate of exiſtence hereafter, or that the threatened judgments will be mitigated by a merciful God.

It is to be feared there are too many who encourage one another in their wickedneſs, ſaying with the profligate libertines, in the book of wiſdom, "Our life is ſhort and tedious, and in the death of a man there is no remedy. For we are born at all adventure, and we ſhall be hereafter, as though we had never been. The breath in our noſtrils is as ſmoke, and a little ſpark in the moving

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ing of our hearts, which being extinguiſhed, our bodies ſhall be turned into aſhes, and our ſpirit ſhall vaniſh as the ſoft air. Come on, therefore —let us enjoy the good things that are preſent— let none of us go without his part of voluptuouſneſs; for this is our portion, and our lot is this" ——Miſtaken wretches! Happy for them would it be indeed, if death was to be their final lot. But let ſuch unthinking reaſoners attend to what divine Truth hath ſaid. "Wo be unto you, ungodly men, which have forſaken the law of the moſt high God; for if ye increaſe, it ſhall be to your deſtruction; and if ye be born, ye ſhall be born to a curſe; and if ye die, a curſe ſhall be your portion. Upon the wicked the Lord ſhall rain ſnares, fire and brimſtone, and an horrible tempeſt—this ſhall be the portion of their cup.

But is there no remedy? No way for eſcape? Indeed there is, my brethren—Wonder, O heavens, and be aſtoniſhed, O earth, at the goodneſs, the undeſerved goodneſs of the Lord! No ſooner had man fallen from his original rectitude, than God proclaimed a Ranſom for him, whereby he might be delivered from the dreadful puniſhment denounced againſt his rebellion. This welcome news was firſt conveyed in that declaration of God to the ſerpent which ſeduced Eve (that is, *the devil who* ſtill *deceiveth the whole world.*) "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed—It ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel." From a pure virgin ſhall proceed a Redeemer, who (tho' his heel, or human-nature, ſhall ſuffer—though he ſhall be wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and *bruiſed* for our iniquities) ſhall effectually cruſh the head,

or dominion of Satan, and by his atoning death, *deſtroy him that had the power of death.*

In a leſs obſcure manner, God afterwards repeated this gracious promiſe to faithful Abraham, and to Jacob, ſaying, "In thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed:" And, from time to time, he frequently foretold the advent of this Meſſiah, by the mouth of his prophets, leſt the unbelieving world ſhould deſpond, or doubt of his veracity. "Behold, ſaith the Lord, I will bring forth my Servant the Branch, and will remove the iniquity of Jeruſalem in one day. I have put my Spirit upon him—he is mine elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth. I the Lord have called him in righteouſneſs—I give him for a covenant of the people—for a light to open the blind eyes—that he may ſay to the priſoners, Go forth, and to them that are in darkneſs, Shew yourſelves. He ſhall be my ſalvation unto the ends of the earth. I will anoint him to preach good tidings unto the meek—I will ſend him to bind up the broken-hearted—to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound—to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God—to comfort all that mourn—to give unto them beauty for aſhes, the oyl of joy for mourning, the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs, that they may be called trees of righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord, that I may be glorified."

Agreeable to theſe predictions, when the fulneſs of time was come, the *Conſolation of Iſrael*, the *Deſire of all nations*, appeared; as *the bright morning-ſtar*, as *the Sun of righteouſneſs*, with his all-chearing beams, to give light and life to a dead benighted world.

Sing,

Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord has comforted his people, and will have mercy on his afflicted. But, above all the creation, rejoice greatly, and shout thou, O man. Behold! thy King cometh—he is just, and having salvation. Arise—shine—for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Comfort ye, then, comfort ye my people, saith our God. Speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished—that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. Thou messenger of God, that bringest good tidings of great joy to all people, lift up thy voice with strength—lift it up—be not afraid—say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God—behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Unto you is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord—unto you a child is born—unto you a Son is given—and the government shall be on his shoulder: And his name shall be called *Wonderful, Counseller, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace.*

When this *holy Child* was brought into the temple to be circumcised, old Simeon, a just and devout man, and full of the Holy Ghost, took him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation—a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Oh what manner of love is this that God has bestowed upon us, in sending his only begotten Son into the world, in the likeness of sinful flesh—his well-beloved Son, who was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. "Bound ev'ry heart, and ev'ry bosom burn" with

gratitude to the Lord of all things, who was found in faſhion as a man, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, "for us men and our ſalvation." Trace him thro' all the ſtages of his uſeful life, and painful death, and you will find matter enough to excite your wonder, love, and praiſe. Tho' he continually went about doing good, not only bringing life and immortality to light thro' the preaching of the goſpel, but alſo healing the ſick, cleanſing the lepers, opening the eyes and ears of the deaf and blind, and raiſing ſome of the dead, yet he was deſpiſed and rejected of men—was mocked, ſpit upon, and ſcourged—and at laſt, after all theſe barbarous indignities, (be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, and be horribly afraid!) he was nailed to a croſs, between two infamous malefactors, where he expired in groans that made the very rocks burſt aſunder.

But for this very purpoſe came he into the world, not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many. He was cut off, but not for himſelf—he has borne our griefs, and carried our ſorrows. Therefore, though reflection on his acute ſufferingsmay extort the ſympathetic tear, yet ought our ſpirits to rejoice in God our Saviour, upon whom was laid the iniquity of us all.

Chriſtians, rejoice with holy triumph—let peals of joy reſound—and, on their rapid wings, let liſtning winds bear away to the empyreal heavens, the odours of your praiſe. The prince of darkneſs is ſubdued—Death is ſwallowed up in victory—For lo! the mighty God who laid down his life, reſumes it again—The gates of the grave fly open to emit the Lord of life from its cold embrace. He aſcends on high, leading captivity captive; and is ſet down on the right hand of the Majeſty in the heavens, crowned with glory and honour—far

above

above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

Seeing, then, that he ever liveth to make intercession for us, we *may* be more than conquerors over all our enemies. He has sufficiently accomplished the office of a Redeemer, and has disarmed the king of terrors of his sting; so that if we perish, the fault must lie at our own doors: For though *in Adam all die*, yet, *in Christ shall all be made alive. He tasted death for every man*—*All*, therefore, without exception, may be partakers of the precious benefits of his cross: And nothing but our own obstinate unbelief and wickedness can exclude us from an interest in it.

The mighty redemption thro' him is every way commensurate with the condemnation thro' Adam: *For if by one man's offence*, says the apostle, *death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.* Thus, in the antithesis between the sin of Adam, and the obedience of Christ, he even exalts the latter, and proves that the imputation of it exceeds the imputation of the former. Rom. 5. 15, &c. Therefore, tho' we have been hitherto like the Ephesians and Colossians, *dead in sins, and the uncircumcision of our flesh*, yet God is able to raise us up, and quicken us together with them—to forgive us all trespasses, and make us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Eph. 2. 5, 6.—Col. 2. 13. *The Lord from heaven*, who bears the peculiar titles of *the second Man* and *the last Adam*, was made a quickning spirit. 1 Cor. 15. 45. And if we pray unto him without ceasing, he will *say unto us, Live. As we have born the image of the earthy*—have been begotten in

the likeneſs of the firſt ſinful Adam, *we ſhall alſo bear the image of the heavenly*—ſhall be begotten again unto a lively hope thro' the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead. The ſame ſpirit that raiſed him up ſhall dwell in us, and quicken our mortal bodies, enabling us to walk in newneſs of life.

Let me, then, urge thee, O convinced ſinner, to be importunate at the throne of grace, until thou art made ſenſible, by *the witneſs of God's ſpirit*, that thy name is regiſtered in *the book of the living*, and thou art enrolled among the number of thoſe who *know they are paſſed from death unto life*—from a death of ſin, unto a life of righteouſneſs—from the fears and power of the grave, to an aſſurance of life everlaſting. For Chriſt died in order *to deliver them who, thro' fear of death, were, all their life-time, ſubject to bondage.* Heb. 2. 15. *I am the reſurrection and the life*, ſays he himſelf: *He that believeth in me, though he were dead* in ſins, *yet ſhall he live* a life of righteouſneſs: *And whoſoever* thus *liveth, and believeth in me* to the end, *ſhall never die* eternally. Reviving promiſe! Oh lay hold of it by faith—that being vitally united to Chriſt, thy body which muſt be ſown in corruption, in diſhonour, and in weakneſs, may be raiſed up in incorruption, in glory, and in power. This mortal ſhall put on immortality; and when Chriſt, who is thy life ſhall appear, thou alſo ſhalt appear with him in glory. He will change thy vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.

Join, then, in prayer with me, that as ſin hath reigned unto death, even ſo may grace reign, thro' righteouſneſs, unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

SER-

SERMON V.

MARK xi. 17.

He taught, ſaying unto them, Is it not written, my houſe ſhall be called of all nations, the houſe of prayer? But ye have made it a den of thieves.

WHAT a poor, helpleſs, indigent creature is man, when unaſſiſted by divine grace! If he be not made ſenſible by the ſpirit of truth, that in God he lives, and moves, and has his ſpiritual as well as animal being, he is blind, knowing nothing: But if he be convinced that in his fleſh dwelleth no good thing—that he cannot think a good thought as of himſelf—and that he is altogether dependent upon God, the author of his life, health, and ſalvation, what a ſource of comfort muſt ſpring up in his ſoul, when he approaches the mercy-ſeat of heaven, in order to make his requeſts known to his compaſſionate Creator and Redeemer, who hath promiſed to hear the prayers of all them that call upon him faithfully! Happy indeed is that man, who, in his retired moments, or in the great congregation, can enjoy an intimate communion with the Lord of life and glory. Surely, he may be ſaid to participate the joys of angels, when, conſidering himſelf as in the preſence of God, he aſcribes, from the ground of his heart, honour, and power, and bleſſing unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. When the ſoul, diſengaged from the world,

world, and diveſted of all earthly affections, looks up towards heaven—when its petitions fly as an eagle, and mount to the habitation of God's holineſs, then may man count himſelf on the higheſt pinnacle of honour. He can ſoar no farther, 'till this corruptible ſhall put on incorruption, and he be called to join in one eternal anthem with the celeſtial choir. Anticipate then, O man, (though in a faint degree) the delightful employment of angels; and hear, with thankful rapture, the words of him who is the Head of the church. *If two of you ſhall agree on earth as touching any thing that ye ſhall aſk, it ſhall be done for you of my Father which is in heaven:* What divine conſolation! What encouragement is here afforded poor worms of the earth, that have their habitations in houſes of clay! Should not this aſſurance animate languid mortals to pour out their ſouls in prayer before God, and to ſupplicate his bleſſing! When he humbles himſelf in beholding the things that are done even in heaven, how great is his condeſcenſion in promiſing to look down, with a propitious eye, on the children of men, from the throne of his glory! Well we may aſk with Solomon, "Will God indeed dwell on earth! Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain him! How much leſs any houſe that we can build him!" Yet hath he graciouſly declared that he will take up his reſidence amongſt us. *If my people, which are called by my name, ſhall humble themſelves, and pray, and turn from all their wicked ways, then will I forgive their ſin: Mine eyes ſhall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.* Tranſporting promiſe! Ought we not then to be diligent in enſuring the attention of God, by our attention to him—by humbling ourſelves in the duſt

before

before him, repenting as in ſackloth and aſhes, forſaking all our iniquities, and offering up our prayers with our whole heart, not with feigned lips—with all the fervid zeal of devotion, not with lifeleſs formality? In whatever place we aſſemble ourſelves to celebrate his worſhip, we ſtand on holy ground; ſanctified by the preſence and majeſty of the Lord of hoſts. And, though the moſt High is not confined to temples made with hands (all nature being his temple, and all ſpace his abode) yet is he more eminently preſent among his ſaints, who are offering up ſpiritual ſacrifices. *In all places*, ſays God, *where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bleſs thee.* Then, with what reverential reſpect and awe ſhould profeſſing chriſtians treat the ſanctuary in which it pleaſeth him to dwell! Should we not come into his courts, and giving unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, ſerve him with ſacred dread, and rejoice before him with trembling? God is greatly to be feared in the aſſembly of the ſaints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him: Honour and majeſty are with him, and holineſs becomes his houſe for ever.

But, alas! How many are there like the Jews, who ſet apart and conſecrate particular places for the ſervice of God, and call them *houſes of prayer*, and yet make them *dens of thieves*, and *houſes of merchandiſe?* Are not numbers now to be found in our temples and ſynagogues, who are ſo buſily employed in buying and ſelling oxen and ſheep, that their hearts will be going after their covetouſneſs, at the very time they pretend to be praying unto God, and their whole converſation is about the world, even on the day, which, by laws, both human and divine, is dedicated to God alone? Nay

—are

—are not moſt of the ſcribes, elders, and chief-prieſts (who ſit in Moſes's chair) greedily *looking for their gain, every one from their quarter?* And yet theſe *changers of money*, though they are *devouring widows houſes* by exacting tythes and ſtipends from them, will *for a pretence make long prayers*, and ſit in the Lord's houſe as teachers and prophets of his appointment?

The profeſſion of chriſtianity, and an attendance on the outward worſhip of God, are eſtabliſhed by univerſal cuſtom; therefore the bulk of mankind, in this, as well as other public modes, are aſhamed to be out of the faſhion. But if a ſerious man attentively examines their practice, it openly declares that there is not the leaſt ſincerity either in their avowal of the chriſtian religion, or in the offerings which they preſent to its divine Author. They *take hold of* Chriſt, and ſay (in the language of the prophet) *we will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.* We will walk after the devices and imaginations of our own evil hearts, but, at the ſame time, deſire to rank among chriſtians, and to be conſidered as ſuch. Though the word of God requires *every one that nameth the name of Chriſt to depart from all iniquity*, yet theſe fooliſhly believe that they may belong to Chriſt, without doing his will, or treading in his ſteps. From this preſumptuous opinion, they conclude there is no more harm in frequenting the tavern, the horſe-race, or the cock-pit, than the church. Hence they may be ſeen regularly gathering in ſhoals at the theatre, the puppet-ſhew, the ball-room, or the card-table, ſix nights in the week; and on the ſeventh day (if the debauch of the preceding evening will permit them) they as regularly

regularly assemble in the church or meeting house yard. And what is the subject of their conversation there? Is it the love of God to a fallen, sinful world? Do they enquire concerning the things that pertain to the kingdom of heaven? Are they asking the way that leads to it? Or provoking one another to love and to good works? No truly—— Such obsolete old-fashioned stuff, they leave to religious fanatics. They are too wise to attend to such matters. All their inquiry, therefore, is about the diversions of the times, the price of provisions, the badness or goodness of the weather, the mal-conduct of the ministry, and the success of the war. The most ignorant peasant, big with self-importance, will sit at the helm of affairs, direct the king, instruct his senators, find fault with the manœvres of his generals, and lay a plan for a speedy reconciliation between the contending parties. But while they are all disputing about the news of the day, the appearance of their *reverend* minister puts an end to their altercation; and they flock into the temple after him with as much bustle and confusion, as if it was a play-house. Their light, and irreverent entrance into it plainly testifys against them that God is not in all their thoughts.

It was customary with the primitive christians, when they came into the sanctuary of the Lord, to prostrate themselves before him, or to cover their faces, in token of that deep humiliation with which we should approach the King of heaven. But into what an unmeaning ceremony is that duty now degenerated? Most people, indeed, still bear the outward semblance of solemnity; and, for form-sake, will put their hats over their eyes for a few seconds: But immediately after (with sorrow

I speak

I ſpeak it) too many diſcover what has paſſed in their hearts by the laugh diſcernable on their countenance, and by their roving looks. Some, apparently more devout, will even condeſcend to kneel: To what purpoſe their own conſciences can beſt inform them. I ſhall not preſume to judge, but leave them to that God, who ſearcheth the reins of the children of men. That charity, which *hopeth all things*, induces me to believe that they addreſs themſelves to God in ſome pious ejaculation; but if they were aſked what ſecret prayer they had offered up, *all* of them, I fear, could not anſwer with truth, that, with revering Jacob, they pronounced, *How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the houſe of God—this is the gate of heaven!* The intent for which they came is ſoon made manifeſt. David ſays, *Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwelleſt in the heavens—they are ever towards the Lord.* But where are their eyes fixed? Are they waiting upon the Lord, as thoſe of ſervants look to the hand of their maſters, or as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her miſtreſs? With confuſion of face they ſhould own that other objects have engaged their notice. They are ſo intent on viewing the various faſhions which pride and fantaſtical whim are daily introducing into the gay world, and in watching opportunities of ſaluting their friends and familiars, that they never think of raiſing their faces to God, which are twiſted about in every direction, but upwards. Like the ſcribes and phariſees of old, hypocrites, they *love ſalutations, and the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues*; therefore are they curtſying, and bowing, and paying compliments to one another.

During

During the progress of the service, while a few of the less giddy part of the congregation are kneeling on their knees, they still continue carelessly lolling over their seats, gratifying the lust of the eye, and imprinting on their memories all the different dresses worn by their neighbours, that they may be furnished with matter for conversation, on the ensuing evening. Too many of those, also, who bend their bodies before the Lord, do it in such an indolent manner, leaning on their elbows, with their heads quite reclined, that it is hard to imagine they thus humble themselves from a sense of that awful Majesty whom they are addressing. Though they cannot kneel in an erect posture to pray, yet when they hear the foot of any one who happens to come late into church, they can then raise their bodies, and even stretch their necks above the seat, to indulge their idle curiosity.

Now, from this strange mode of conduct, is it not evident, that they consider the house of God merely as a place of concourse, in which they may see and be seen; and that traditional habit, not heartfelt religion, brings them together? The statutes of their country, as well as those of God, deprive them of the amusements they enjoy on every other day; and not knowing how to pass away the tedious time, they have recourse to the synagogue, as the surest place to meet their acquaintances—to hear the occurrences of the past week, and to form engagements for the next.

How preposterous, also, is their lip-service! Though the established clergy are tolerably quick in reading the prayers, yet their *devout* hearers generally out-strip them, and gabble over the form of prayer, without the least respect to the several

parts of which it is compoſed. How often have I overheard them loudly repeating the abſolution, with ſeemingly greater fervency than the Lord's prayer, though the Rubric informs them that it ought to be pronounced by the prieſt alone. And, at other times, muttering parts of a disjointed ſentence by fits and ſtarts. Does not ſuch ſhameful inattention clearly prove that their imaginations are wandring on ſome worldly projects. May we not reaſonably ſuppoſe that ſome of them are ſaying in their hearts, like the Jews of old, *When will the ſabbath-day be gone that we may ſell our corn, and ſet forth our wheat!* Let that umpire which God has ſet up in their breaſts determine whether their thoughts have not been at the ends of the earth, and far from God, while with their lips they have been calling upon the "holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth."

But this is not all—Others, more openly audacious, are employed in a different manner. While the miniſter is reading the leſſons, and the clerk ſinging the pſalms, inſtead of attending to his holy word, or joining in the high praiſes of God, they are taken up in private colloquy—in liſtning to the remarks which ſcandal or vanity ſuggeſt.

Tell me now, ye who viſit the church from cuſtom, merely becauſe your forefathers did ſo, if ye were admitted into the preſence-chamber of the king, would ye not approach him with that ſubmiſſion and humility due to royal dignity? Would ye not bend the knee before him, and with the utmoſt veneration requeſt his audience? Would ye not take peculiar care to keep the door of your lips, leſt ye ſhould offend with your tongue? Would ye be ſo daringly preſumptuous as to talk with thoſe who ſtood near you? Would ye not

preſent

preſent your petitions with that decency of deportment which might prove moſt likely to obtain ſucceſs? Would ye not look towards him, and watch every motion of his countenance? Would ye be caſting your eyes around on the furniture of his palace, or the train of attendants that ſurrounded his throne? Surely not—for if ye did, ye know your requeſt would be rejected with contempt. If then ye would be ſo cautious in your behaviour to an earthly king, what ſacred watchfulneſs ſhould ye uſe, when addreſſing the King of kings? When aſking favours of the higheſt importance from the great and mighty Potentate of heaven and earth? In his court, at leaſt, ſhould not your converſation be ſuch as becometh the goſpel of Chriſt? Oh be convinced, ye deluded worſhippers, if God be not the ſubject of your thoughts—if your hearts be not earneſtly aſpiring after the enjoyment of him, ye *come together, not for the better, but for the worſe*; and ye are bringing down curſes, inſtead of bleſſings, on your heads. If merely the repetition of prayers could ſecure the favour and protection of God, the Phariſees would have been heard. Be not, therefore, like them, leſt, like them, ye receive the greater damnation. While ye are going through a dead round of formal duties, or (what is worſe) converſing with each other, are ye worſhipping the Lord in the beauty of holineſs? No verily—but in the deformity of unholineſs? As Jeſus ſaid to the woman of Samaria, ſo ſay I unto you, *Ye worſhip ye know not what:* And the ſame inſcription may be written on your altar which St. Paul found on that of the Athenians, *To the unknown God.* Ye have no experimental knowledge of him; otherwiſe ye would not thus mock him to his face.

God is not worſhipped with men's hands. 'Tis not the motion of your lips, nor the bending of your bodies, that he requires; but, as the pſalmiſt ſays, *your ſouls ſhould follow hard after, and wait upon your God.* This is the offering he demands—Thus hath he ſaid, *My Son give me thine heart*; and *love me not in word, but in deed and in truth. If I regard iniquity in my heart*, ſays David, *the Lord will not hear me.* But (O melancholy reflection!) what multitudes will now ſtand before the Lord in his holy tabernacles, who not only regard iniquity in their hearts, but practiſe it daily in their lives. They profeſs to know God, but in works deny him. They flatter him with their mouth, and lie unto him with their tongue, not being ſtedfaſt in his covenant. They confeſs that they "have followed too much the devices and deſires of their own hearts," and yet are reſolved to follow them ſtill, and to purſue thoſe ſins which moſt eaſily beſet them. They pray that God may "forgive them their treſpaſſes, as they forgive others," yet, at the ſame time, they are at enmity with their neighbours, and are returning evil for evil. They ſupplicate God's grace that they may "hear meekly his word, and receive it with pure affection," yet like thoſe whom Malachi ſpeaks of, they *ſnuff at* God's ſervice, and ſay, *What a wearineſs is it!* In ſhort, the common courſe of their lives totally deviates from the dictates of religion, and is in direct oppoſition to the ſpirituality of their own prayers. And yet (ſuch is their infatuation!) they think their ſacrifice is acceptable unto God. But what does he declare concerning them? *I have no pleaſure in you—neither will I accept an offering at your hands. Sabbaths, and the calling of aſſemblies I cannot away with—*

with—it is iniquity—they are a trouble unto me—I am weary to bear them. I hate, I deſpiſe your feaſt-days; nor will I ſmell in your ſolemn meetings. When ye ſpread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear—your hands are full of blood. Iſa. 1. 13, &c. A celebrated writer (Wm. Law) has obſerved that "prayers, whether private or public, "are only particular parts, or inſtances, of *devo-* "*tion*, its true definition being, A life given, or "*devoted* to God." He remarks further, that "Devotion is like friendſhip—you hear of it every "where, but find it no where. It is every where "to be ſeen, in modes of worſhip, in forms of "ſpeech, in outward adorations, but is in reality "ſcarce to be found. Hence alſo it is, that you "ſee as much difference in the devotion, as in the "faces of chriſtians; for wanting its true foun-"dation, being like an affected friendſhip, it has "as many *ſhapes*, as there are *tempers* of men. "Many people are thus far ſincere in their devo-"tions, that they would be glad to pray devoutly; "they ſtrive to be fervent, but never attain to it, "becauſe they never took the only poſſible way. "They never thought of altering their lives, or "of living different from the reſt of the world, "but hope to be devout, merely by reading over "books of devotion; which is as odd a fancy, as "if a man ſhould expect to be happy, by read-"ing diſcourſes on happineſs. When theſe people "dare take chriſtianity as it is offered to them in "the goſpel—when they deny themſelves, and "renounce the world, as our Saviour exhorted "his followers, they will then have begun devo-"tion."

Perhaps, reader, you ſtyle yourſelf a *chriſtian*—But wherefore? Is it becauſe you regularly attend the prayers of the church, and receive the ſacrament once in a month? Alas! If this be all which conſtitutes you a *chriſtian*, you are a *pagan* ſtill. A name ſignifies nothing before God. A madman may put a paper-crown upon his head, and call himſelf a king. But his ſaying ſo, does not make him one. He muſt have all the true enſigns of regal authority, before others will allow him to be what he pretends. In like manner, you muſt have the ſpirit of Chriſt, or, the ſcriptures inform you, you *are none of his*. If your religion conſiſts only in outward ſhew—if it does not prevail on you to dedicate your life wholly unto God, you reſemble that ſon in the goſpel, who told his father he would go work in his vineyard, but went not—Like Herod, you ſeek Chriſt under a pretence of worſhipping him, but with determination to kill him—Like Judas, you betray him with a kiſs—You invoke his name, like thoſe inſulting ſoldiers, who ſaluted and hailed Jeſus as their King, yet ſmote him on the head—who bowed the knee before him in ſeeming adoration, but, at the ſame time, ſpit upon him, and crucified him.

'Tis true *there is no other name given under heaven whereby we can be ſaved, but only the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. Yet it cannot be ſuppoſed that the bare mention of it can draw down bleſſings from that God who has ſaid, *The prayers of the wicked are an abomination in my ſight*. What avails it to ſay, Lord, Lord, if ye do not obey his will? Though the name of Chriſt pleads ſtrongly for the *righteous* before God, yet the *wicked* muſt not conſider it as a philtre or charm; for, if there be no virtue in thoſe who pronounce it, be aſſured, there

there is none in the appellation itself. When the *seven sons of Sceva, vagabond Jews*, took upon them to adjure an evil spirit to come out of a man, by the name of the Lord Jesus, their invocation only provoked the dæmoniac, so that *he leaped upon them, and grievously wounded them.* When those who are only christians by title, not in reality, come together with the assembly of the faithful, they are not therefore to reckon themselves among the number of true believers; for they rather *wound Christ in the house of his friends.* It is said of satan, in the book of Job, that he presented himself before the Lord, along with the host of heaven: But he was satan still. Though in company with the angels of light, yet he remained the prince of darkness—Isaac was easily imposed upon by the artifice of Jacob, who counterfeited the hairy skin, and assumed the name of his brother. But God is not a man that he should be deceived by any external appearances, however specious. *All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* He knows how far our hearts are upright with him. Our worship, therefore, must be consistent with God's perfection. As he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works, every address to him must be presented with purity and holiness: And as he is a Spirit, we must worship him in spirit and in truth. Otherwise, when we come to appear before him, he may well ask us, as he did the apostate Jews, *Who hath required this at your hands to tread my courts? What have ye to do to declare my statutes, or that ye should take my covenant in your mouths, seeing ye hate instruction, and cast my words behind you?* The day is coming when many will say unto Christ, *Lord, Lord,*

have

have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name done many wonderful works? Yet will he profess unto them, *I never knew you, Depart from me all ye that work iniquity.*

Now, notwithstanding Christ has assured the wicked (however observant they have been of religious ordinances) that this is the sentence which shall be passed upon them, yet how many of them cry out, "The church—the church." But what said God to the Jews, on a similar occasion? *Trust ye not in lying words, that cannot profit, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, &c. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsly, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods, and come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? Is this house become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord.* Jer. 7. 10, &c. Many, perhaps, may imagine, that this bears no allusion to them, as they are not guilty of the same crimes, which the Jews were. Certain it is that numbers punctually attend the court-worship of God, who do commit such things; and others, though they cannot be accused of these gross acts of guilt, yet, in a secondary sense, may justly be charged with them, when we consider the spirituality of the law of God. Now, how many *steal* their neighbour's property by unjust suits at law, and by dishonesty or extortion in their common dealings? *He that hateth his brother is a murderer*, says St. John. How many then, in this sense, *murder* their fellow-creatures, by injuring their reputation, and doing them all the evil that their revengeful hearts can dictate? How many murder their own time, their own souls, nay mur-

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der the Son of God over again by their ſins? Are not others conſtantly committing *adultery* with the world, *going after their lovers which give them corn, and wine, and oil*——forſaking Chriſt who vouchſafes to call himſelf the *huſband* of his church ——forſaking God, who is our *bridegroom? Know ye not, ye* ADULTERERS, AND ADULTERESSES, (ſays St. James, 4. 4.) *that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.* What ſwarms of men daily perjure themſelves in courts of juſtice, but more eſpecially, in our cuſtom-houſes? Surely, there is ſcarce a merchant who imports goods, ſcarce a captain of a veſſel, who is not guilty of downright wilful perjury. And do not others *ſwear falſly*, pledging their word, their honour, their ſouls in a lie, and that on the moſt trivial occaſions? Attend at a fair or market, and you will hear the ſeller declaring, with the moſt ſolemn oaths, that he will take no leſs for his wares, and the buyer that he will give no more: Yet both of them will at laſt conſent to ſplit the bargain, being more anxious to ſave a few pence than their immortal ſouls, which they are conſtantly calling upon God to damn. What multitudes, alſo, *offer incenſe* at the ſhrines of Bacchus and Venus? While ſome *make their bellies their God*, and others their covetouſneſs, which in ſcripture is called *idolatry*. In ſhort, has not almoſt every one ſome favourite idol ſet up in his heart to which he bows? Some beſetting ſin, which leads him captive, and outrivals God? Yet all theſe different profeſſed votaries of ſin will ſit before God in the church, as if they were his people. But ſurely they make his houſe *a den of thieves*. What, then will the Lord do unto you, ye inconſiſtent

ſiſtent worſhippers? Or unto *the houſe which is called by his name, wherein ye truſt? I will even forſake you* (ſays he) *as I did the tabernacle of Shilob, and I will caſt you out of my ſight.*

Your own articles thus define a church. "The viſible church of Chriſt is a congregation of *faithful* men, in the which the *pure* word of God is preached." Agreeable to this definition, Chriſt has ſaid, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.* Now, if there be but *three faithful people* in the midſt of a promiſcuous multitude, they are the congregation gathered in Chriſt's name—they are the church: The reſt are aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe. For, what is a chriſtian? Is he not one who has the mind of Chriſt, and is *purifying himſelf even as he is pure?* It is not then, ſufficient that we be by any rite or ceremony incorporated into his viſible church. We muſt be ingrafted into Chriſt, and abide in him, as a branch in the vine, being fruitful in every good word and work. *He that is joined unto the Lord is one ſpirit*, ſays the apoſtle: And again, *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature—all old things are paſſed away, and behold, all things are become new.* Conſequently, while we ſtill retain our old carnal nature, and have not put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs, we have no part in him, nor will our portion be among the bleſſed. While we act in oppoſition to the precepts of Chriſt, and yet take his name into our polluted lips, we only aggravate our own damnation. His goſpel commands all men every where to repent. If, therefore, we acknowledge our belief of it, and yet will not walk worthy of our holy vocation, it ſhall be

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more tolerable, in the day of judgment, for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for us: In vain, then, do wicked Chriſtians (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) worſhip God: Yet will they croud his courts, and *lean upon the Lord, and ſay, Is not the Lord among us? No evil can come upon us.* Hence they are as punctual in attending all the means of grace, as the moſt devoted followers of Chriſt; and will eat the outward ſigns of his body and blood, without being partakers of, or even heartily praying for, the inward and ſpiritual grace, through which alone they can profitably feed upon the Lamb of God. At the altar, they ſay, "We offer, and preſent unto thee, O Lord, ourſelves, our ſouls and bodies, to be a reaſonable, holy, and lively ſacrifice unto thee;" yet how unholy, how unreaſonable are their lives! Follow them to the feſtal board, and there obſerve them, in an hour or two after this ſolemn dedication of themſelves to God. After juſt drinking the cup of the Lord, they *drink the cup of devils.* Oh what light, what frivolous converſation, nay, what filthy jeſting, paſſes there! Nothing but loud mirth, and noiſy laughter is to be heard, and the name of God is never mentioned, except it be in a profane exclamation. They call the ſabbath the *Lord*'s day, and yet make it their *own* day, dedicating it to the goddeſs, Vanity. The poor eſpecially, make it a time of pleaſure and debauchery: So that I verily believe, there is more wickedneſs committed by labourers and tradeſmen on the ſabbath-day, than there is during the reſt of the week. And though the rich will refrain from cards and dancing, yet they are forming parties of amuſement for the following day, and diverting themſelves with the Gazzette, or Magazine.

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O ye *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*, let me adjure you by that Christ whom ye profess to serve—let me entreat you, as you regard the salvation of your immortal souls—let me persuade you by the tender mercies of God, to fulfil your baptismal engagement. Ye once solemnly promised "to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, as also to keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of your life." But have ye done so? Have ye not rather followed the devil and all his works, &c.? Oh repent, and that suddenly, lest the Lord arise in his anger, and ye perish at his presence. Rest not in your forms of devotion. If ye desire to recommend yourselves to the love and favour of God, let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. *Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.* If ye would make your prayers available, neglect not the weighty matters of the law. If ye expect God's ears to be open unto you, your ears must be open to his word; and every thought and headstrong passion must be brought into subjection to the gospel of Christ. Therefore, now lift up your hearts to Christ, that he may come with the cords of his love, and drive out all the buyers and sellers that lodge within you, and overthrow the tables of the money-changers, and so make your souls a fit habitation for his holy spirit. If he dwells in the temple of your body, ye may then enter into his temple, and he will make you joyful in his house of prayer. Wash your hands in innocency, so may ye compass the altar of your God: For it is only the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man that availeth much.

much. The eyes of the Lord are upon the upright, and their prayers are as golden vials, full of odour. Up, and be doing then—If ye desire to worship God aright, shew your intention by your actions. Keep a single eye to the glory of God, and to the great end of christianity, the salvation of your souls. Whatever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then will the smoke of your offering ascend like incense, and be as a sweet-smelling savour unto God.

SERMON VI.

ISAIAH xxviii. 16.

Thus ſaith the Lord God—Behold! I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a ſtone, a tried ſtone, a precious corner-ſtone, a ſure foundation: He that believeth, ſhall not make haſte.

AS God has no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but would rather that they ſhould return from their evil ways and live, in order to bring about, if poſſible, their everlaſting ſalvation, he has ſent forth his prophets, to warn them of their danger, to threaten them with his judgments, and to invite them by his tender mercies, that they may come unto him by repentance and faith. Hence we find Iſaiah, in this chapter, denouncing *wo to the crown of pride, and to the drunkards of Ephraim*, who ſhould *be trodden under feet*: And then giving them *precept upon precept, and line upon line, here a little, and there a little*; he takes as much pains to inſtruct them, as a parent would with his young offſpring, when they are firſt beginning to learn. He *teaches them knowledge*, as if they were children juſt *weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breaſts*: (verſe 9.) And he lays before them *the reſt* which all that were *weary* of ſin ſhould find, and the times of *refreſhing* that ſhould come from the preſence of the Lord. (verſe 12.) But what was the reſult of all his friendly endeavours? *They would not hear*, ſays he—They

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deſpiſed his counſel, would have none of his reproof, and laughed at all his menaces; ſaying, *We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement: When the overflowing ſcourge ſhall paſs through, it ſhall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falſhood have we hid ourſelves.* However, that God might be clear of their blood, he was pleaſed to reveal his gracious intention of raiſing up an horn of ſalvation for them, that if they repented and believed, they might yet be ſaved; or if not, they might die in their ſins.

Thus ſaith the Lord God—Behold! I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a ſtone, a tried ſtone, a precious corner ſtone, a ſure foundation: He that believeth ſhall not make haſte. In what an awful manner is this inſtructive, comfortable ſentence introduced! *Thus ſaith the Lord God.* And when he ſpeaks, ſhall not the world give ear? Is not the Lord God able to kill, or to make alive—to ſave, or to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell? Then ſhall not man ſtand in awe of him, and the whole earth keep ſilence before him? *O earth, earth, earth, hear ye the word of the Lord.* The matter which he is going to declare is ſo big with mercy, and of ſuch vaſt importance to the ſons of men, that he uſhers it in with an interjection which demands not only our attention, but our admiration. *Behold!* As if he had ſaid, Wonder, O heavens, and be aſtoniſhed, O earth! Conſider well what I am now about to deliver. Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth. I, I who am the mighty God—who created the world, and all things that are therein—I who am Governor among the nations, and excellent in working, *Behold! I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a ſtone,* &c.

The meaning of the word *Zion*, is, a monument raiſed up: And wherever it is mentioned in ſcripture, it ſignifies the church of God, the members of which are monuments raiſed up, by divine mercy, from a ſtate of miſery and death, to happineſs and life. Accordingly, they are called *the precious ſons of Zion*; and are *God's witneſſes unto the people, declaring unto them glad tidings:* Acts 13. 31. And though God is *the Saviour of all men*, yet, ſays the apoſtle, he is *more eſpecially the Saviour of them that believe.* The Lord dwelleth in his holy hill of Zion, and loveth the gates thereof, more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Pſal. 87. 2.

Now, as *mount Zion cannot be removed, but abideth for ever*, as the monument is to endure for endleſs ages, the foundation of it muſt neceſſarily be *eternal.* Then, who, or what, is the foundation of the church? The *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, whoſe *goings forth have been from of old, from everlaſting*—who is invariably *the ſame*, and whoſe *years ſhall not fail.* He is the only *foundation* of the *great and precious promiſes* made to us in the covenant of grace—They are all conveyed through him, in whom God is well pleaſed. In him they are all *yea and amen*, ſure and certain, *to them that believe.* He is the foundation of all our hopes and joys. Whatever expectations we have either of grace or glory—whatever conſolations we enjoy in theſe earthen veſſels, they are all derived from him. He is the ſource of all bleſſedneſs, the light of the world, the life of men. He it is who ſends *the Comforter*, to witneſs with our ſpirits that we are the heirs of heaven. In ſhort, he is the ground-work of all our happineſs, both in time, and in eternity.

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The ſacred penmen abound much in allegorical figures and imagery. Therefore, the evangelical prophet here deſcribes the Lord Jeſus Chriſt under the ſtriking metaphor of *a ſtone*, whereby is denoted his great ſtrength and durableneſs: And becauſe he was not laid by man, it is ſaid, in the book of Daniel, that he was *cut out of the mountain without hands*. Dan. 2. 45. St. Peter calls him *a living ſtone*, becauſe, as God, he has life in and of himſelf; and becauſe, as *the Prince of life*, he communicates *ſpiritual life*, and is *the Author of eternal ſalvation to all them that obey him*.

When Zechariah foretold his coming he made uſe of theſe remarkable words. *Upon one ſtone ſhall be ſeven eyes—Behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* Zech. 3. 9. Thus, the firſt part of this prophecy points out to us the penetration, vigilance, and wiſdom of Chriſt, *whoſe eyes are as a flame of fire*, and who has promiſed to be with his church even unto the end of the world. Or we may underſtand it in a different ſenſe, namely, that the eyes of all men ſhould be upon him, as the Saviour of mankind; agreeable to theſe words of Ezekiel, *I will be known in the eyes of many nations*. The latter part of the paſſage ſeems to allude to the breaſt-plate of judgment; worn by the high-prieſts. Upon this breaſt-plate twelve precious ſtones were ſet in gold, and on theſe the names of the twelve tribes of Iſrael were engraven, like the engravings of a ſignet; and the prieſts continually bore it upon their hearts, when they went in unto the holy-place, for a memorial before the Lord. Thus, the great *High-prieſt of our profeſſion* has *put on righteouſneſs as a breaſt-plate*, for all true Iſraelites, who are not only *graven upon the palms of his hands*, but *car-*

ried in his boſom. Aſcended upon high, as their Advocate and Interceſſor, he preſents them before his Father, that he may remember them for good.

All, therefore, who are *Iſraelites indeed* may ſafely commit the keeping of their ſouls to him: the ſtone on which their names are written (ſays Iſaiah) is *a tried ſtone.* Being found every way qualified for the office of a Saviour, he was approved of God, and ſet apart for the great work of man's redemption. *Behold, the man whoſe name is* THE BRANCH, *he ſhall build the temple of the Lord, and ſhall bear the glory, and ſhall ſit and rule, and be a high-prieſt upon his throne.* Zech. 6. 12. Chriſt was alſo *a choſen ſtone,* ſays St. Peter, *fore-ordained before the foundation of the world.* Now, if we conſider the ſufferings he underwent, while in his humiliation here below, we ſhall ſee, in a clearer point of view, the propriety of the epithet affixed to his figurative name, by the prophet, in the text. Though *he thought it no robbery to be equal with God,* yet *he took not upon him the nature of angels, but took upon him the ſeed of Abraham.* Though *in the form of God,* yet he *made himſelf of no reputation*—not only condeſcending to be *born of a virgin,* but even to become a *miniſtring ſervant.* He left the boſom of his Father—the heaven of heavens—to lie down in the manger of a ſtable: And when arrived to manhood, though the world was made by him, and he gave the foxes holes, and the birds of the air neſts, yet he *had not* himſelf a place *where to lay his head.* He retired into lonely deſerts, and while others were ſleeping on beds of down, he continued there whole days and nights, in hunger, and thirſt, and cold—in watchings, and inceſſant prayers for the ſins of a guilty world. About the time of his ſhewing unto Iſ-

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rael, how grievouſly was he tempted of the devil, and yet how manfully did he reſiſt all his fiery darts, ſaying, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* Therefore, reſolving to fulfil his divine miſſion, he travelled through their cities and villages, in wearineſs and painfulneſs, preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and curing all manner of ſickneſs and diſeaſes among the people. And what was the requital he met with? Nothing but the moſt keen reproaches and abuſe. *He was a worm and no man—all they that ſaw him laughed him to ſcorn—he was a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief. He came unto his own, and his own received him not*—They called him a glutton, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners, a madman, and a devil. Nay thoſe of his own houſe lifted up their heels againſt him—his kindred after the fleſh ſaid he was *beſide himſelf*, and wanted to confine him. Yet ſtill he perſevered in doing the will of him that ſent him. He grew not faint in his mind, nor weary of the labour of love, which he had voluntarily undertaken; but repaid the ingratitude of man with redoubled kindneſs, heaping coals of fire on their heads. He even grieved for the hardneſs of their hearts, and wept over them, becauſe of their unbelief.

If we now follow him to Gethſemane, what a dreadful ſcene will preſent itſelf to our view! His *ſoul* being *exceeding ſorrowful even unto death*, he fell upon his face, proſtrate on the cold ground. How violent muſt have been the conflict between him and the prince of darkneſs, when he cried out, *O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me?* So fervent was his prayer, and ſo excruciating was the agony which he felt, that *his ſweat*

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was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground: Therefore was an angel ſent to comfort and ſtrengthen him. But though his heart was melting within his bowels, like wax, on account of the bitter draught which was given him, yet he ſtarted not from the trial. With all the reſignation of an obedient ſon, who was to be made perfect through ſufferings, and with all the magnanimity of an hero, he reſolved to drink the very dregs of the cup of trembling; and, therefore, thus breathed out his pious ſoul, *Not as I will, O Father, but as thou wilt.* Then one of his own familiar friends—one of the twelve whom he had choſen to be with him in his tribulations, appeared at the head of a great multitude, armed with ſwords and ſtaves, to deliver him into their hands. Though he might have commanded more than twelve legions of angels to deſtroy them, yet he patiently gave himſelf up as a victim to their malice: and during his trial before the high-prieſts, who, with the men of war, ſet him at nought, and mocked him, as a ſheep before her ſhearer is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth. Being then delivered into the cuſtody of mercileſs ſoldiers, they reviled him, buffetted him, ſcourged him, and put a crown of prickly thorns on his head. *He hid not his face from ſhame and ſpitting—his viſage was marred more than any man's*—and the *plowers made long furrows on his back*: Bearing his croſs, he was led as a lamb to the ſlaughter. The moſt nervous part of his frame (conſequently, the moſt ſenſible of pain) was nailed to the accurſed tree; and being raiſed up a ſpectacle to men and angels, he hung bleeding between two notorious felons, amidſt the contumelious ſhouts of a blood-thirſty rabble. Then all the powers of hell were let looſe upon him—

him—then were the iniquities of us all laid upon him—then the burden of our ſins, the accumulated ſins of all mankind, preſſed him ſore, and drank up his ſpirit—then, indeed, did he *waſh his garments in wine, and his cloaths in the blood of grapes*—then did he *tread the wine-preſs of the wrath of God*, and taſte of the vinegar and gall, which extorted that moſt pathetic exclamation from him, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Thus deſerted both by heaven and earth, he yielded up the ghoſt.

May we not then ſay as he did, with his expiring breath, *It is finiſhed?* He has fully perfected the work for which he came into the world, by being obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. Verily, he was *a tried ſtone*.

But ſtill further——Have not all the people of God, in every age of the world, *tried* him to the uttermoſt, and found him a *faithful witneſs*, true to his word on which he cauſed them to truſt? Were any that confided in him ever put to confuſion? Has he not been *the Saviour of Iſrael, in every time of trouble?* Have they not always experienced the accompliſhment of that promiſe, *When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: When thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee?* Iſa. 43. 2. Has not this God of Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego, walked with them through the furnace of bodily affliction, ſpiritual dryneſs, temporal adverſity, and worldly perſecutions? Has not this God of Daniel, frequently delivered them from *the horrible pit*, from the jaws of the devil, and the children of diſobedience, who have *gaped upon them with their mouths, as ravening and roaring*

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ing lions? Has he not been their fortreſs, and high tower, their ſhield and buckler, when attacked by earth or hell? Was he not always the *ſure and ſtedfaſt anchor of their ſouls*, which kept them immoveable in all the ſtorms of this mutable world? Has he not often *rebuked the winds*, ſaying, *Peace —be ſtill.* Has he not ſaid unto the billows of temptation, *Hitherto ſhall ye go, and no farther?* And when ſailing thro' the waves of death, has not this heavenly pilot directed their courſe, ſmoothed their paſſage, and landed them ſafe in that delightful haven of reſt, where they are no more *carried about with winds, nor toſſed with tempeſts?*

Were it poſſible that we could aſk the glorified ſaints above, by what means they arrived at that ſummit of felicity, they would anſwer us in ſuch language as this. "To Jeſus, the adorable Jeſus, we are indebted for all the bleſſings we enjoyed, while ſojourners on earth, and for thoſe rivers of pleaſure of which we now drink in heaven. We relied on him with implicit aſſurance, and he proved himſelf *a friend that ſticketh cloſer than a brother.* He gave us grace to caſt our every care upon him, becauſe he cared for us, and undertook for us, when we were ſore oppreſſed. He made darkneſs light before us, and crooked things ſtraight. We depended only on his guidance, and the illumination of his ſpirit, and were therefore led into all truth. He taught our hands to war, and our fingers to fight, and thro' the ſtrength of *the Captain of our ſalvation*, we overcame the world. We took him for our only portion in life; and therefore, in the hour of death, we feared no evil—his rod and his ſtaff comforted us. He walked with us through the gloomy valley; and by an eaſy tranſi-

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tion, we paſſed from death unto life—from a *vale of miſery and tears*, to a manſion of everlaſting reſt and peace. Becauſe we truſted only in his righteouſneſs, and the merits of his croſs, by which we were crucified to the world, our lot is now among the bleſſed. Here we dwell in the full fruition of immortal joys, and caſt our crowns before the Lamb, who hath redeemed us unto God, and waſhed our robes, and made them white in his all-cleanſing blood. O precious Jeſus! A ſight of thee on thine exalted throne fills us with bliſs unutterable. The ſun is darkneſs itſelf in compariſon of thee—The moon and ſtars withdraw their ſhining, and ſink into deformity, eclipſed by thy radiant beauty, thou *Sun of righteouſneſs*. Angels, and archangels, aſcribe glory unto thee, for thou art *God over all, bleſſed for evermore.*"

Having, then, my brethren, ſuch a faithful Redeemer, ſhall we not reſign ourſelves unreſervedly into his hands, and cry out with the ſweet ſinger of Iſrael, *Truſt in him at all times, ye his ſaints—truſt in him, all ye people?* Jeſus is that *gold* TRIED *in the fire*, which he counſels you to *buy of him, that ye may be rich* in grace and glory. Rev. 3. 18. *In him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*; and he is of infinitely higher value than thouſands of gold and ſilver; Yea, ſays Iſaiah, he is *a precious corner-ſtone*. And ſays St. Peter, *Unto you which believe, he is precious*. Ye ſee him to be *the faireſt among ten thouſand*—he is *altogether lovely* in your eyes. Ye diſcern ſuch *comelineſs* and *beauty* in him, that all created good has no charms for you. Ye are conſtrained to cry out, *Whom have we in heaven but thee, and what is there upon earth that we deſire in compariſon of thee!* He is *precious* in all his offices to you, for he has redeemed

redeemed your ſouls from death and hell. As your *Prieſt*, he has *made reconciliation for* your *iniquities*, and *ever liveth to make interceſſion for you.* As your *Prophet*, he inſtructs you—ye learn of him to be meek and lowly in heart. As your *King*, he reigns unrivalled in your breaſt, and bears the ſway over all your affections. Ye were once, *by nature, the children of wrath, even as others*; but Jeſus, by grace, has now made you the children of mercy: Therefore he is ſweeter to you than honey or the honey-comb—he is more PRECIOUS *than rubies.* Ye were once, alſo, *living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another*; but Jeſus has now calmed your jarring paſſions: For he is the *corner-ſtone* that binds the ſides of his *ſpiritual houſe.* This *Prince of peace* unites both *Jews* and *Gentiles* into one body, making *all nations, people and languages* of one heart and of one mind, however diſcordant in opinion once. His blood is the firm cement that joins them to each other, and builds up *the houſehold of faith. Jeruſalem*, that is, the church (ſays David) *is built as a city that is compact together.*

'Tis true, indeed, that *diviſions* may ariſe among the ſaints of God; and ſome may not preſerve *the unity of the ſpirit, in the bond of peace.* Yet ſtill the church remains entire—many will *cleave unto the Lord*, and walk together in love. Some may apoſtatize from him, and baſely deny him and his people; but their unbelief can never make the faithfulneſs of God of none effect: For, ſays Iſaiah again, Chriſt is *a ſure foundation.* Though *Hymeneus* and *Philetus* may err concerning the truth—though their word may eat as doth a canker, and overthrow the faith of others, *nevertheleſs* (as St. Paul affirms) *the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having*

having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his, and let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from all iniquity. 2 Tim. 2. 19. If ye have *ſubſcribed with your hands unto the Lord*, and have entered into covenant with him, ſetting to your *ſeal*, that ye will *depart from all iniquity*, while ye adhere to your contract, the Lord will fulfil his part alſo, and ſealing you with the holy ſpirit of promiſe, will acknowledge you as his people. If ye do not forſake him, he will never forſake you. Ye may build upon him with the utmoſt ſafety and confidence; for nothing can poſſibly ſhake ſuch a ſolid, ſuch a *ſure foundation*. Chriſt is the *Rock of ages*, upon which the church is built, and the gates of hell ſhall never be able to prevail againſt it. The ſtructure that is erected on him ſhall be eternal as himſelf—time ſhall not ſee the end of its duration.

Now, *he that believeth ſhall not make haſte*. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *the deſire of all nations*, having been very early revealed as the Saviour of the world, was therefore long expected by the Jews. If then we attend to the *time* when the prophet wrote theſe words, probably, their primary ſignification is this. The Meſſiah, whom ye look for, ſhall undoubtedly come in the fulneſs of time appointed by divine wiſdom; therefore, thoſe who have a thorough reliance on the veracity of God, ſhould not be impatient, but calmly wait for the completion of his promiſe. But, with regard to us upon whom the ends of the world are come, and whoſe anceſtors have ſeen Chriſt in the fleſh, this part of the text bears a different meaning.

When a ſinner is firſt convinced that he has been building his hopes upon a wrong foundation, and is brought to ſee the utter impoſſibility of ſalvati-

on by his own imperfect obedience, he begins to seek redemption in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the *sure foundation*. But because he does not *immediately* find that *rest* promised to the *weary and heavy-laden*, it too often happens that he either gives up his pursuit, or grows fretful and dissatisfied with God's delay, crying out, *Why is he so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?* Now *he who believeth* that there shall be a performance of those things which God hath promised, ought *not to make haste*. With resignation to the divine will, he should daily supplicate the throne of grace; and though the Lord may seem to *cover himself with a cloud that his prayer should not pass through*, yet the penitent should be still humbled before God; and rather than accuse him, should condemn himself for want of faith, or for *keeping back part of the price*, as *Ananias* did. But if he has (literally, or in affection) given up *all* for Christ, it is his duty still without murmuring and discontent, to hang upon, and trust in the Lord who *hideth himself*. *It is good that a man should both hope*, says Isaiah, *and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.* Lam. 3. 26. *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry:* Heb. 10. 37. And *blessed are all they that wait for him.* Isa. 30. 18.

In the first general epistle of St. Peter, where the text is quoted which I am now endeavouring to explain, it is thus altered—*He that believeth shall not be confounded:* (1 Pet. 2. 6.) And indeed this seems to be the truest exposition, as it is so correspondent with many other passages of scripture. *He who believeth on Christ, shall receive remission of sins—is not condemned, but shall be saved—he shall live—he shall never die—he shall not be*

ashamed,

ashamed, either in this world, or in that which is to come. Who *shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?* They who walk uprightly shall appear with boldness before the throne, when shame, horror, and dismay shall seize upon the wicked, and *all that hate Zion shall be confounded.*

Ye are God's building, says St. Paul to believers, who also are termed *lively stones* by St. Peter, to distinguish them from unbelievers, who are DEAD *while they* seem to *live. Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.* Eph. 2. 20. Your faith is grounded upon the doctrines taught by all *the holy men of God*, and ye are joined together in one spirit by the Lord Jesus—Abiding in him, who *walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*, ye grow up in grace and knowledge, *building one another up on your most holy faith. The government* of the church is *laid upon his shoulders*; for he is not only the *foundation*, but the *head* of it. He directs all things in it, and *divideth unto every man* his graces, *severally, as he willeth, He holdeth the stars* (or ministers) in *his right-hand.* And indeed, *except he build the house, they labour in vain that build it. Except he keep the city*, his *watch-men wake but in vain.* But if he prospers the work of his labourers, *there will be no complaining in our streets*—the heavenly Jerusalem shall *increase with all the increase of God, and the head-stone thereof shall be brought forth with shoutings, crying, grace, grace unto it.* Zech. 4. 7. What a precious promise has God made to his church! *Behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy*

foundations with ſapphires: And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleaſant ſtones. Iſa. 54. 11, 12. All the inhabitants of *the city of the living God* ſhall be *holy, without ſpot, and without blemiſh*—they ſhall be founded upon Chriſt, and his holy prophets, whom *the topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal.* Its miniſters ſhall be the lights of the world (as *windows* are to a houſe) and all its inferior officers and members ſhall be ornamented with all the graces of the ſpirit of God; even as a bride is adorned with her jewels. All her *ways*, alſo *ſhall be ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths peace.*

Thus ſhall it be done unto the men whom *the King of ſaints* delighteth to honour. Let me, then, beſeech thoſe who are made *fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God*, not to forfeit their glorious privileges, by diſobedience to the laws of their heavenly Prince. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the ſpirit of God dwelleth in you?* But, ſays St. Paul, *If any man defile the temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy: For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.* 1 Cor. 3. 16. As the Lord manifeſted his preſence in the Jewiſh tabernacle, by that cloud which covered and filled it, ſo he dwelleth in the hearts of all *believers* by his ſpirit—hence theſe words, *Ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the ſpirit.* Epheſ. 2. 22. And as the tabernacle was appropriated entirely to religious purpoſes, and all the veſſels were hallowed with anointing oil, ſo all true chriſtians are dedicated unto God, and made *ſervants of righteouſneſs*, or in other words, *veſſels unto honour, ſanctified and meet for their maſter's uſe, and prepared unto every good work.* All, therefore, who are the conſe-

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crated repoſitories of an in-dwelling God, muſt take heed, leaſt, by any kind of profaneneſs, they be again deſecrated, and the heavenly inhabitant be provoked to withdraw. If the *Ichabod*, if *the glory be departed from Iſrael*, Iſrael ſhall aſſuredly periſh. When ye are once ſet apart for the ſervice of God, ye are under an indiſpenſable obligation to be holy in all manner of converſation. And if ye return again to the pollutions of the world which ye have eſcaped, ye ſhall be *miſerably deſtroyed*. As it is *in every great houſe*, ſo it is in the houſe of the Lord. *There are veſſels of gold and ſilver, of wood, and of earth.* 2 Tim. 2. 20. Some, on account of their ſuperior attainments in grace, are more precious and honourable in the ſight of God, and are employed in the higheſt offices: While others, comparatively ſpeaking, are *veſſels unto diſhonour*. Let theſe latter beware, leſt, thro' their unprofitableneſs, they be *eſteemed as broken earthen pitchers*, and at laſt become *veſſels of wrath*. *By much ſlothfulneſs*, ſays Solomon, *the building decayeth; and through idleneſs of the hands, the houſe droppeth through*. Therefore, again I ſay, beware, ye lukewarm Laodiceans, leſt ye *loſe the things that ye have wrought*. Oh pray earneſtly, that *the Repairer of the breach* may *build the old waſte places, and raiſe up the former deſolations*. Remember theſe awful words, *If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him*, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, whoſe *name is Jealous*.

And *if judgment begin at the* HOUSE *of God, what ſhall the end be of them that obey not the goſpel of God*.

O ye, to whom the Lord Jeſus is *a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence*, how will ye be able to eſcape in the day of his wrath? *On whomſoever*

ſoever this ſtone ſhall fall (ſays he) *it ſhall grind him to powder.* Dreadful threatning! And yet, perhaps, ye not only *deny the Lord that bought you*, but are even perſecuting him in his members. Oh deal not ſo madly, leſt that come upon you which is ſpoken of by the prophet, *I will make Jeruſalem* (the church) *a burdenſome ſtone for all people: All that burden themſelves with it, ſhall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together againſt it.* Then, be no longer found among *the diſobedient, and them that ſtumble at the word:* But *come unto Chriſt, as unto a living ſtone, diſallowed indeed of men, but choſen of God, and precious, that ye, as lively ſtones, may be built up a ſpiritual houſe, an holy prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable to God, by Jeſus Chriſt.* 1 Pet. 2. 4.

I would now addreſs myſelf to thoſe who take upon them to build up the church of Chriſt.

My brethren, if *God* has ſent us to work in his vineyard, we will be *labourers together with him*, and gladly *ſpend and be ſpent* in his ſervice. If we are appointed by *him* to the *miniſtry of reconciliation*, and if Chriſt be revealed in our hearts, out of the abundance of our hearts, our mouths will ſpeak. With St. Paul, we will *determine to know nothing elſe but Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified*; and all our diſcourſes will be perfumed with the odour of his name. Permit me then, with all humility, to aſk, Is this your reſolution, and your practice? Are ye convinced that *the ſtone which the builders diſallowed, the ſame is made the head of the corner?* Do ye ſtill inſiſt that *there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby they may be ſaved, but only the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt?* Do ye conſtantly affirm with the great apoſtle of the

Gentiles,

Gentiles, *No other foundation can man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ.* Can ye say with him, *We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God?* 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24. As he is the *beginning, and the ending* of our salvation, is he the beginning and the ending of your public harangues? Do ye inculcate upon the minds of your audience this fundamental truth, *whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost?* If this be not the tendency of all your preaching, ye are to be held *accursed.* Gal. 1. 9. If ye only *read* a dry, spiritless system of Ethics, the hearts of your hearers will remain unchanged. God will not bless your word to their edification. If ye make *good works* the ground of acceptance with God, ye are under a most dangerous delusion. Like the builders of Babel, ye are using *brick for stone, and slime for mortar.* Ye begin entirely at the wrong end, attempting to build a superstructure without a foundation. When Christ dwells in the heart by his spirit, the converted sinner will as naturally bring forth the fruits of righteousness, as a good tree will produce good fruits. *Make the tree good,* says our Saviour, *then the fruit will be good also.*

Now, we are the subordinate instruments in the hands of God, wherewith he works upon the hearts of the people—fashions them anew—and makes them members of his mystical body, the church. Let us then cheerfully co-operate with God, in pulling down the strong-holds of satan; and, according to the grace of God given unto us, as *wise master-builders,* let us diligently lay the

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tried ſtone, Chriſt Jeſus, as the *only foundation* on which true chriſtian morality muſt be built. It has been already laid by God in the counſels of eternity—in all the promiſes held forth by his prophets—and in the ſeveral epiſtles and exhortations of all the apoſtles, and faithful meſſengers of God, who have lived before us. If, then, we preſume to lay any other, inſtead of being *workers together with God*, we ſhall be found reſiſting his will, and labouring in the ſervice of antichriſt. We are the pillars of the devil's kingdom, and God will confound us, and our proud aſpiring Babel.

But it is not ſufficient that we lay this foundation—we muſt alſo *take heed how we build thereon*. The great and notable day of the Lord is coming, the day of general conflagration, when *the fire ſhall try every man's work of what ſort it is*. As a furnace ſeparates the droſs from all kinds of metals, ſo the Lord Jeſus ſhall ſit in judgment upon us, as *a refiner and purifier of ſilver*, to render unto every man according to his deeds. He will *purify and purge the ſons of Levi*. *Who* then amongſt us *ſhall be able to abide the day of his coming? And who ſhall ſtand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's ſoap*. Mal. 3. 2, 3. *If any man build upon this foundation, gold, ſilver, and precious ſtones*, the pure truths of the goſpel without any baſe alloy, *his work ſhall abide, and he ſhall receive a* great, a glorious, an eternal *reward*. But if any man builds *wood, hay, ſtubble*—ignorantly adulterates the goſpel of Chriſt, by teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, by adding to or diminiſhing from the word of God—*his work ſhall be burnt, and he ſhall ſuffer loſs; but he himſelf ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by fire*. 1 Cor. 3. 12, &c. Though God

will

will conſume his work, yet he ſhall be plucked as a brand out of the burning—*he ſhall be ſaved*, but with as much difficulty as a man who narrowly eſcapes with his life out of an houſe on fire. Becauſe he reſted on Chriſt alone for ſalvation, and renounced all ſelf-dependance, he ſhall be admitted into heaven: But becauſe he was not *careful to maintain* [redacted] doctrine, *he ſhall ſuffer loſs*—there ſhall be a great dimunition of his glory. *He that breaketh the leaſt of theſe commandments*, ſays our great Law-giver, *and teacheth men ſo, ſhall be accounted leaſt in the kingdom of heaven.* Mat. 5. 19. Inſtead of ſhining forth *as the brightneſs of the ſun in the firmament*, he ſhall only ſhine as a twinkling ſtar. Mark this ye Antinomian teachers, who *uſe your liberty as an occaſion to the fleſh*; and while ye pretend to be *made free* by Chriſt, are the *ſervants of ſin*.

Now, my brethren, if we deſire to have many for *our crown of rejoicing*, when we ſhall appear before God to give an account of our ſtewardſhip, let us take heed to ourſelves, and to our doctrine. Let us pray fervently unto God, that he may *do good unto Zion, and build up the walls of Jeruſalem*. Let us ſhew, by our precept and godly example, that we live in Chriſt, and Chriſt in us; ſo ſhall we rejoice in the day of his appearing and glory, that we *have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain*.

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SERMON VII.

ISAIAH XXVIII. 17.

Judgment alſo will I lay to the line, and righteouſneſs to the plummet; and the hail ſhall ſweep away the refuge of lies, and the water ſhall overflow the hiding-place.

SUCH is the pride of *the natural man*, (i. e. a man in a ſtate of nature, devoid of ſaving grace) that he cannot humble himſelf ſo far as to accept ſalvation upon the eaſy terms laid down in the goſpel. God has mercifully propoſed it as a free gift, through Jeſus Chriſt, his well-beloved ſon, *in whom he was* manifeſted, *reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them:* And all he requires of us, in order to make us partakers of it, is, that we ſhould *repent, and believe the record which he has given of his Son.* Yet vain man can ſcarce brook the thought of being indebted even unto God: But, elated with ſelf-ſufficiency, imagines that he can entitle himſelf to heaven by his "own ſincere, though imperfect obedience."

Under this fatal miſtake did the body of the Jews labour, not only after, but before our Saviour's appearance in the fleſh: Therefore, the prophet, in this chapter, informs us, that *they made lies their refuge, and under falſhood did they hide themſelves.* But, that they might be convinced of their error, the Lord God, in the words preceding,

preceding the text, ſhews them the only ground upon which they might found their expectations of grace here, and glory hereafter. *Behold! I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a ſtone, a tried ſtone, a precious corner-ſtone, a ſure foundation: He that believeth ſhall not make haſte*—or (according to St. Peter) *ſhall not be confounded.* Obſerve, and ponder well the covenant which I now make between me and all people. I will lay help upon One that is mighty to ſave, even the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who being *tried in all points*, and being *obedient unto death*, ſhall become the only Rock upon which my church ſhall be built: And *whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall not periſh, but ſhall have everlaſting life.* But, on the contrary, if any *neglect this great ſalvation* provided for them, and truſt to their own works, their *judgment* (ſays God) *will I lay to the line, and* their *righteouſneſs to the plummet: And the hail ſhall ſweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters ſhall overflow the hiding-place.*

The law of God, by adherence to which ſuch numbers falſly hope to be ſaved, may be very juſtly compared to a *line*, or ſtraight rule, which marks out their deviations from moral rectitude. If they ſtart aſide like a deceitful bow—if they turn either to the right hand, or to the left, the *line* of God's law, which is *holy, juſt, and good*, immediately ſhews them that they have wandered from God, and erred from that narrow path of holineſs, which he has commanded them to walk in. In like manner, the word of God, by which they are to regulate their lives, is as a *plummet* which will try their works, whether they are correſpondent with that word; and if they do not exactly quadrate together, the vengeance of God, like

like a ſtorm of *hail*, ſhall *ſweep away* their falſe confidence, and the *waters* of his juſtice ſhall *overflow* thoſe banks, by which they were in hopes to ſtem the indignation of God, and behind which they thought themſelves ſecure.

Now, that this may not be the unhappy lot of any who happen to look over theſe pages, I hope they will permit me (as one that is appointed to watch for their ſouls) to lay their *righteouſneſs* to the *line* of ſcripture, and their *judgment*, or opinions, to the *plummet* of truth; that ſeeing how far ſhort they fall of the glory of God, they may be abaſed before him, and then exalted through the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt.

All things that are reproved are made manifeſt by the light; and *bleſſed is he who will not be offended at it*, when it diſcovers his ſpiritual darkneſs. God is my witneſs, that I would rather commend, than cenſure: But as I am charged *to declare the whole counſel of God*, and to *reprove*, as well as to *exhort*, I muſt ſpeak boldly, whether ye will hear, or whether ye will forbear, that I may render up my accounts with joy at the laſt great audit. Indeed I dare not *ſpeak ſmooth things*, to thoſe who require rough applications, leſt I ſhould appear to pleaſe men rather than God: Therefore, patiently bear ye the word of reproof, knowing that I ſeek your good alone. Though my addreſs may ſeem diſcourteous, yet 'tis very far from my intention to offend. My motive is pure—my heart yearns over you—I long for your ſalvation: Then, let not thoſe *who truſt in themſelves that they are righteous*, be offended at what I here offer to their ſerious conſideration.

Allowing it poſſible that man could be ſaved by works of righteouſneſs, yet if we examine the conduct

conduct of those who believe that erroneous doctrine, by the word of God (out of which all men shall be finally judged) it will, I think, plainly appear, that *their* righteousness does not come up to the divine standard; consequently that they stand in need of a more perfect righteousness, even that of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

David, from his own experience, as well as from inspiration, declares, that *the mouth of the* RIGHTEOUS *speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment—he will give thanks unto thy name, O God.* Psal. 37. 30. Now, what do the mouths of the unregenerate speak of? Is it of that *wisdom which cometh from above and maketh wise unto salvation? Which is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and hypocrisy?* Not so—their *wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.* James 3. 15. Nothing but folly, mischief, and deceit proceed out of their lips. Their tongues are unruly members, full of deadly poison, uttering scandal, curses, lasciviousness, unrighteousness. Dress, plays, assemblies, &c. are the constant subjects of their conversation. On Sunday indeed, they say—"We bless thee, Almighty God, and give thee most humble and hearty thanks for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;" but these are only words of course with them—they have no interest in that redemption: For, those whom Christ redeems from hell, are first *redeemed from all iniquity.* Nay, so unaccustomed are they in their private intercourse with each other, to hear the name of God and Jesus Christ, that if a follower of the Lamb *gives thanks unto God*, and assures them that he has *redemption in*

the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of his sins, they will plainly tell him they "are astonished at his presumption, and shocked at his making such frequent mention of these sacred names;" though they can hear them uttered, in vollies of oaths, out of the mouths of their husbands, servants, or children, without being offended at, or taking the least notice of the audacious blasphemy. The very objectors themselves, also, will use these adorable names in vain, when they are suddenly surprized by some insignificant occurrence, or trivial accident; and too often, when, in languid formality, they are chiming over their devotion in church. Had David lived in these days, what a disagreeable companion must he have proved to them; for he says, *My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness, O God, and thy salvation*, ALL THE DAY LONG. Whereas now, if a zealous servant of the Lord but slightly touches on the glorious theme, the whole company stare on him with amazement, as if he *brought strange things to their ears*, and wonder at his unseasonable rudeness: While one, more forward than the rest, sarcastically tells him that "Religion should never be introduced into company." Then, with one consent, they turn the *insipid* subject, and resume their own unmeaning chit-chat, multiplying words on the most frivolous incidents of life, *and speaking vanity every one with his neighbour*—though God's word is express against them, *Let not foolish talking, nor filthy jesting, be once named amongst you; but let your conversation be seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace to the hearers.* "Well"—say they, "we allow we do not *always* talk or think of the things of God, because there is a time for every thing; and we *sometimes* speak of righteousness."

righteouſneſs." *Sometimes!* What! Will ye walk after the fleſh—will ye follow the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, from ten in the morning 'till ten at night, and then think to put off God with the ſcraps of your time, when ye bow the knee before him for a few moments, at your riſing up, and lying down? Be not deceived—God is not to be mocked thus. Though ye may ſay your daily prayers, as regularly as you wind up your watches, and attend on the ſervice of your ſynagogues once a week, as punctually as you wind up your clocks, yet examine yourſelves whether ye do not perform theſe temporal and ſpiritual duties with the ſame frame of mind? Do ye not find that your prayers become a drudgery, as well as the buſineſs of your houſe? And have ye not more pleaſure in ſitting down to a card-table, or in dancing at a ball, than ye have in going to your knees? Be aſſured, if religion be not your conſtant employment—your one buſineſs—if it be not interwoven with all the actions of your life—ye have never yet ſerved God aright; nor will he accept an offering at your hands, when ye have *a little leiſure* from the avocations and amuſements of life. *Bleſſed is he* (ſays the royal pſalmiſt) *that doth righteouſneſs at* ALL TIMES. Ye may, if ye pleaſe, brand the children of God with reproachful names, becauſe they exhort you to have the Lord *always* in your thoughts—to be in ſuch an habitual frame of mind as to *pray without ceaſing*—and to take heed to your lips, knowing that *for every idle word which men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account in the day of judgment.* Mat. 12. 36. Ye may call them "Enthuſiaſts, and hypocrites"—But, with much greater juſtice may they retort theſe appellations upon you; for ye are ſuch

in reality, when ye *profeſs to know* and to worſhip *God, but in works deny him.* So exceſſive is your love for the periſhing gew-gaws of earth, that ye purſue them with all the warmth of zeal; and can expatiate, with ſeemingly higher rapture, upon the beauty of your gowns or lap dogs, your horſes or hounds, than many faithful miniſters expreſs, when commending *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.* Are ye then ſo deluded by the prince of darkneſs, as to think yourſelves *righteous*, when your hearts delight in, and your tongues are employed on ſuch trifling ſubjects? It is written, *the lips of the* RIGHTEOUS *feed many*—Thoſe who have *taſted the good word of God*, will feed their fellow-creatures, who are *periſhing for lack of knowledge, with the ſincere milk of that word*: But ye feed and ſtrengthen (I ſhould rather ſay, impoveriſh and weaken) one another, with the huſks of your own ſilly imaginations. Though, for form-ſake, ye keep a bible in your houſes, yet ye keep another in your hearts of your own making, which gives a latitude for your favourite amuſements; and though, in every inſtance, it contradicts that book, written with the wiſdom and power of God, yet ye will believe your own falſe ſpirit which comes from *below* (becauſe it agrees with fleſh and blood) rather than the Spirit which deſcends from above, and is Truth itſelf.

The heart of the righteous (ſays Solomon) *ſtudieth to anſwer.* Prov. 15. 28. But, when ye are *aſked a reaſon of the hope that is in you*, how few of you can give a ſatisfactory account of your faith. And when reproved for any of your ungodly practices, by a lover of your ſouls, ye hate the light becauſe your deeds are evil, and harden

your

your hearts againſt the truth which galls you. Inſtead of ſubmitting to it with all humility of mind, and reſolution of amendment, ſaying, as David did unto Nathan, *I have ſinned againſt the Lord*, ye fly into an outrageous paſſion, and deſpiſe the kind hand which is adminiſtring balm to your corrupted ſouls. Sometimes, indeed, ye will make an anſwer. But of what nature? Is it not generally dictated by ſpite, revenge, or contempt? Therefore, it is clear, the devil puts it into your mouths, not God; for, from *his* word, ye can anſwer nothing, though ye will give your own worldly arguments with all the warmth of burning Tophet.

Solomon further declares, *The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life.* But is not the mouth of every unconverted ſinner *a well of death?* Has not your ungodly converſation ſtrengthened the hands of others in their wickedneſs? How often have ye, by calumniating and ridiculing the children of God (perhaps ye are now laughing at the term) prevented many ſincere, convinced ſouls from caſting in their lot among his perſecuted people? And how frequently have ye endeavoured to bring back to their vomit thoſe who had clean eſcaped the pollutions of the world? Have not threats, ridicule, and puniſhments been made uſe of, to ſhake the confidence of any child, friend, or acquaintance, whoſe eyes have been happily opened to ſee the neceſſity of "a death unto ſin, and a new birth unto righteouſneſs?" Thus, ye ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men: Ye will not go in yourſelves, neither will ye ſuffer them that are entring to go in.

Another ſcriptural mark of the righteous is their courage—*they are as bold as a lion.* They are not

aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt, becauſe they experience it to be the power of God to their ſalvation. They dare profeſs it, before the wiſe, the mighty, the noble, the learned of the earth, who count the preaching of the croſs fooliſhneſs. They reſolutely ſound the trumpet in every ear, without reſpect of perſons, without fear of man, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils. They confidently acknowledge the Lord to be *their* God, and pray to him openly, as Daniel did, tho' the princes of the land ſhould threaten to caſt them into a burning fiery furnace, or a den of lions. Now, have all of you this undaunted ſpirit, this chriſtian magnanimity? No—too many of you dread the reproaches of earth more than the wrath of heaven. Ye court the favour and preferments of men, more than the approbation and ſmiles of God. Like Peter, ye fly from Chriſt, and deny him, when perſecution ariſeth, becauſe of the word; and are more fearful to be found among the *few* who are treading circumſpectly in the narrow path that leads to everlaſting life, than among the thoughtleſs *multitude*, who are running headlong in the broad way to death and deſtruction.

Once more—*The deſire of the righteous is only good*—Mind—*only good*, without any mixture of evil. Now, whither do your deſires tend? To earth, or heaven? Are your affections ſet on things above, or things beneath? Is it the only wiſh of your ſouls to do, and ſuffer, the righteous will of God? To think nothing, to hear nothing, to ſay nothing, to do nothing, but what is *good*—what may redound to the glory of God, and promote your own eternal ſalvation? Are ye ſeeking the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, with all your heart and ſtrength? Leaving thoſe things

which

which are *behind*, are ye preſſing forward to thoſe things which are *before*? In ſhort, do ye really hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs? If ſo, may the Lord of all power give you ſtrength to hold faſt what ye have already attained, and freſh ſupplies of grace, that ye may be filled with *all the fulneſs of God*. But if not, ye have never been renewed in the ſpirit of your minds—ye are ſtill ſenſual, minding earthly things; and are far, very far from the kingdom of God.

Laſtly, we are told, *The root of the righteous yieldeth fruit*. What, then, are the fruits that ye produce? There are but two kinds, good, and bad; the fruits of the ſpirit, and the fruits of the fleſh. I ſhall lay them both before you; then, ſearch into your own hearts, lives, and tempers, and judge for yourſelves with which of theſe they correſpond. The fruits of the *Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, meekneſs, fidelity, temperance*. The fruits of the *fleſh are adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, hatred, variance, wrath, emulations, hereſies, envyings, drunkenneſs, revelling, banquetting, and ſuch like*. Now, which do ye find abounding in your hearts? Which are predominant in your lives? If the former, ye are ingrafted into *Chriſt Jeſus*, the true and living Vine—are the children of God, and will ſpring up into everlaſting life—If the latter, ye are branches of a corrupt tree—are of your father the devil, and your end will be everlaſting damnation. If God does not change your nature—if ye be not born again from above—ye will be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous—with thoſe that are accepted through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt—

waſhed

washed from all defilement in the blood of *the Lamb, slain to take away the sins of the world.*

I have now, my beloved, with great freedom and plainness of speech, drawn a sketch of the righteousness of the world. And would to God it did not form such an hideous portrait! Oh that the spirit of God, dipping his pencil in love, may alter the uncomely features, and erase the foul image! Oh that He may take the sponge of mercy, and obliterate the black shades, changing the frightful devil into an angel of light! But, 'till that great Limner, who has delineated all the unregenerate in such black colours, be pleased to brighten the picture with more lively tints, it must remain as it is.

But, perhaps, there are some who think they are not quite so bad as those I have been describing: For, *there is a generation* (says Solomon) who *are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness*—washed in *the fountain* of Christ's blood, *opened for sin and uncleanness*. These go by the name of Moralists. Because they are a little more strict and circumspect in their outward conduct, more punctual in their attendance on the worship and ordinances of God, and run not into the same excess of riot, with the profane swearer, and common drunkard, they see no necessity for any farther change. They "*thank God that they are not extortioners, unjust, or adulterers*—they *give tythes of all that they possess*"—and (if you believe them) "they do nobody any harm—they pay every man his due, and live peaceably among their neighbours." Some of their acquaintances, also, will tell you, that "they are the best men, or women, in the world; and if they don't go to heaven, they know not who will." They are

cried

cried up as the ſaints of the age, and held forth as patterns of piety, highly worthy of imitation; for "they are very good church-people, and very charitable to the poor." In ſhort, they are like the Phariſees of old, but with this difference, that theſe *chriſtian* hypocrites only *faſt twice in the year*, on Good-friday, and King Charles's martyrdom; whereas the Jewiſh Phariſees *faſted twice in the week*.

Reader, are you one of them? Come, now, and let us reaſon together. You ſay, "you are no extortioner—you are not unjuſt in any of your dealings." I much doubt the fact. Do you never over-reach your unſuſpecting neighbour either in buying or ſelling? Do you never take any advantage either of his neceſſity, or his ignorance? Do you always give what you think the real value of his goods? And do you alſo ſell your commodities on the moſt moderate terms? Have you never over-charged a *rich* cuſtomer, under the plauſible pretence of being thereby enabled to afford the *poor* a bargain? Do you never *grind the faces* of your journeymen or labourers, expecting them to work beyond their ſtrength, and at the ſame time giving them the *loweſt* wages? God ſays, *Maſters, give unto your ſervants, that which is juſt and equal. Thou ſhalt not oppreſs an hired ſervant that is poor and needy: At his day, thou ſhalt give him his hire, neither ſhall the ſun go down upon it (for he is poor, and ſetteth his heart upon it) leſt he cry againſt thee unto the Lord, and it be ſin unto thee.* Coloſ. 4. 1. —Deut. 24 14.—Now, are you free of blame in this reſpect? Or, if you are a ſervant, are you *obedient to them that are your maſters according to the fleſh, with fear and trembling, in ſingleneſs of heart, as unto Chriſt?* Is it *with good-will you do*

ſervice,

ſervice, not as a man pleaſer, but as the ſervant of Chriſt?

You "thank God you are no adulterer:" But take heed leſt you are, though a deceived heart may make you think otherwiſe. Remember how *exceeding broad the commandment is*, and how ſpiritual in its nature. It extends not only to every *action* of your life, but alſo to every *word* that proceeds out of your mouth, and to every *thought* that ariſes in your heart. Accordingly, Chriſt ſays, that *whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart:* And, ſays David, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer.* If, therefore, you have not *made a covenant with your eyes, ſo as not to look upon a maid,* you are as guilty before God, as if you had actually committed adultery.

Perhaps, you may be conſcientious in giving the miniſter his tythes, from a bigotted attachment to the church. But do you never defraud the king? Have you conſtantly given *cuſtom to whom cuſtom* is due? And regularly and fairly entered your imported or exported wares in his Majeſty's offices? Are you ever concerned in the horrid practice of ſmuggling? If ſo, you are a thief and a robber. Nay, if you even buy contraband goods, you encourage a rogue, and are partaker with him in his villainy: And you are building up your houſe by unrighteouſneſs, if you make your neighbours purchaſe them at as high a rate as if you had paid the full duty.

You affirm you "do no body any harm"——This is a matter will bear much diſpute. Do you never openly ſlander any one? Or by ſly inuendos endeavour to injure their reputation? Have you never

never ſupplanted them in their buſineſs, either directly, or indirectly? But, granting that you have not acted thus diſingenuouſly, yet you muſt not conſider religion ſo much of a *negative*, as of a *poſitive* nature. It does not conſiſt in "doing no harm," but in doing all the good within the compaſs of your power. It requires you to do unto others as you think they ſhould do unto you, upon a reverſe of circumſtances. Is this the mode of conduct you purſue? If not, you have no right to be called an *honeſt heathen*, much leſs a *pious chriſtian*.

Are you flattering yourſelf that you are no murderer? I fear you are—Look well to yourſelf, leſt you ſhould be found one in God's ſight. St. John tells you, *Whoſoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.* 1 John 3. 15.—Do you, then, retain any enmity in your heart againſt thoſe who have offended you? Do you let the ſun go down upon your wrath? Are you demanding *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth?* Do you reſiſt evil, and return railing for railing? Oh beware—Chriſt informs you, that *whoſoever ſhall ſay to his brother, Thou fool, ſhall be in danger of hell-fire.* Mat. 5. 22.

It may be alſo, that you think you are no idolater—But it is much to be feared you are; though, perhaps, you are more refined in the choice of your gods than other heathens, who worſhip *wood* and *ſtone*; while your idols are *ſilver* and *gold*. Don't you bow down to theſe? Is not the *king's image* ſet up in your heart? Are you not *going after your covetouſneſs, which* by the inſpired writers, is termed *idolatry?* Do you never *make your belly your God?* Have not honour, profit, pleaſure

pleasure (the three grand idols of the world) a strong prevalence over your affections? Do they not draw your soul after them? Then, certain it is, that you serve other gods, beside the Lord of heaven and earth.

You are reckoned "a good churchman," because you frequent *a house made with hands*, vulgarly called, The church. But, whenever you have entered into it, has your devotion been such as became a *spiritual* worshipper? In all *the beauty of holiness*, and from the ground of a truly contrite, believing heart, have you poured out your supplications unto him that heareth and answereth prayer? Has your soul been panting after the living God, even as a hunted hart panteth after the water-brooks? If not, you are not a living member in the *Church of Christ*—you are not a vessel in that *tabernacle which God hath pitched, and not man. Your fear towards God is taught you by the precepts of men.* You have been accustomed from your infancy to appear in the courts of the Lord; and therefore, if you only shew yourself there, and repeat the form of prayer after your minister, you think you have done your duty, and then you return home well pleased with your performance.

And in what does your charity consist for which you are so much celebrated? You spare some of the crums which fall from your table—you give away, perhaps, the refuse of a sumptuous dinner that was prepared for your rich friends and kinsmen, who are to make you a recompence again. If you meet an object in great distress, instead of relieving his wants at your own charge, you go round the neighbourhood, and raise a collection from those who are ashamed to refuse you: And

thus

thus you get the name of a charitable man (which feeds your pride) you ſave your own purſe, and you hope to be accepted of God for all your acts of benevolence.

Perhaps, you are now ready to cry out, "I would not be as uncharitable as you are for all the world." Oh! my beloved, could I give you a true ſight of yourſelf in the glaſs of God's word, you would then ſee that I have been dealing moſt charitably and affectionately with you. In truth, I ſpeak out of a regard for your precious ſoul; and therefore would aſk you, with St. Paul, *Am I become your enemy, becauſe I tell you truth?* Believe me, I am your beſt friend: For *open rebuke is better than ſecret love.* I have been endeavouring to draw you off from *the refuge of your own lies*—from a carnal confidence, and deluſive ſecurity, that you may find *Chriſt, the* only true *hope of glory.* I have been ſhewing you your own poverty and nakedneſs, that you might be made *rich in* FAITH, and cloathed with the evangelical wedding-garment, in which alone you can appear at *the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb.* Gladly would I convince you to renounce your own fancied righteouſneſs, that you might be *found in the righteouſneſs which is of God, by faith in Jeſus Chriſt.* How grievous is it to an enlightened mind, and feeling heart, to hear a filthy worm, ſinful duſt and aſhes, pleading his good deeds as meritorious of heaven; inſtead of coming unto God, with the ſacrifice of a broken ſpirit, ſmiting upon his breaſt, and crying with the ſelf-abaſement of the penitent publican, *God be merciful to me a ſinner!*

I came (ſays *the Saviour of them that* BELIEVE) *not to call the righteous* in their own eyes, *but ſinners,* ſenſible, loſt, undone ſinners, *to repentance.*

And again, adds he, *They that are whole* in their own conceit, *need not a physician, but them that are sick*, and see the neceſſity of being healed by Chriſt. Now, if you have never been deeply convinced that you are, by nature, *as an unclean thing*, and that *all your very righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags*, in the ſight of a holy God, you will never truly come to Chriſt for pardon and ſalvation: Therefore, he has informed you, *publicans and harlots ſhall enter into the kingdom of God before you*. And, indeed, the reaſon is very obvious. *They* are ſinning with an high hand againſt the Lord—their offences are of the deepeſt dye—they live in open violation of almoſt every law of God. It is an eaſy matter, then, to convict *them*. When God applies his word with power to their hearts, and they plainly ſee that *no extortioner or fornicator* (while they continue ſuch) *ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven*, they are alarmed and terrified—they break off their ſins by repentance, and come by faith unto the Lord Jeſus, who, on account of his peculiar compaſſion to ſuch notorious offenders, was called *the friend of publicans and ſinners*. Whereas *you* (comparing yourſelf with *them*, and finding you are not guilty of the atrocious crimes to which *they* have been addicted) think that God will not be extreme to mark what you have done amiſs. Calling your *little ſins* by the ſoft name of *infirmities*, to which human nature is ſubject, you puff yourſelf up with an opinion that you are high in the favour of God; and ſay with Job (whom Elihu reproved) *I am clean, without tranſgreſſion—I am innocent, neither is there iniquity in me.*

But, what ſaith the Lord, who once charged his angels with folly? *Though thou waſh thee with nitre, and take thee much ſoap, yet thine iniquity is*

marked

marked before me. However you may endeavour to extenuate your faults, yet are they regiſtered againſt you. You are *weaving the ſpiders web*—but your *webs ſhall not become garments; neither ſhall you cover yourſelf with your works, for they are works of iniquity.* You have a name to live, but, behold, you are dead. You have no vital, internal religion. You are one of theſe *that juſtify themſelves before men, but God knoweth your hearts.* Luke 16. 15. Like a whited ſepulchre, you appear beautiful outwardly, but within you are full of all uncleanneſs. Turbulent, unruly paſſions of every kind domineer over you. You have the ſhell of devotion, without the kernel—the carcaſe, without the life—the dry bone without the marrow—the ſhadow, without the ſubſtance—the letter without the ſpirit—*the form of godlineſs*, without *the power*. Like a jaded horſe in a mill, that is ſtill going round, and round, and round, you begin, every day, the ſame courſe of formal duties, and find yourſelf at laſt where you firſt ſet out, without the leaſt renovation of nature—any change wrought upon *the inner man.*

Now, *wo unto them*, ſaith the Lord, *that cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit.* And, in the chapter from whence the text is taken, it is added, *the bed is ſhorter, than that a man can ſtretch himſelf on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himſelf in it.* Like Adam and Eve, you are ſewing *fig-leaves* together, that the ſhame of your nakedneſs may not appear: But as God cloathed them with *coats of ſkin*, ſo muſt you *put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs*, or forfeit all pretenſions to the kingdom of heaven. Though you may eſteem yourſelf, or may appear to the world, "a very good kind of man," yet God con-

cludes you equally under ſin with the moſt abandoned blaſphemer; and except you repent, and be truly converted—except *Chriſt be made of God unto you wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption*, you ſhall, likewiſe, periſh. Pray then, oh fervently pray, that God may create in you a clean heart, and renew a right ſpirit within you. Confeſs that unto the Lord Jeſus alone belongeth righteouſneſs, but unto you, ſhame and confuſion of face. Let your ſoul truly wait upon God; for from *him*, not from *yourſelf*, cometh your ſalvation. *Surely*, ſays he, *there is no Saviour beſide me*. Therefore, proud, arrogant formaliſt, make not your *works* your ſaviour. Rob not Chriſt of his mediatorial glory, nor preſumptuouſly pluck the crown from his head, to place it on your own.

While you are comforting yourſelf with reflections what "a good-natured harmleſs creature" you have been, and what acts of charity you have done, you are only building a caſtle in the air, which will never reach to heaven. But if you would be like that *wiſe man* our Lord mentions, who *built his houſe upon a rock*, dig deep, and lay Chriſt for your foundation. Then, the rain of temptation may deſcend, and the enemy of your ſoul come in upon you like a flood, but the ſpirit of the Lord will lift up a ſtandard againſt him. Though the ſtream of perſecution may beat vehemently upon you, yet ſhall you ſtand unſhaken. You *ſhall be as a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and a brazen wall againſt the whole land*. And amidſt the wreck of burning worlds, you ſhall defy the rage of fire.

But if, on the contrary, you lay any other foundation than Chriſt, you are like *a fooliſh man that built*

builds his house upon the sand. And what will be the fatal consequence? When a jealous sin-avenging God shall *pour down an overflowing rain of fire and brimstone*—when the whirlwind of the Lord shall come forth in fury, it shall fall grievously upon your head—beat down all your ill-grounded hopes—and great shall be your destruction.

Fly, then, thou *rotten wall*, to the eternal *Rock*—to the *stone laid in Zion*; that being built upon him, you may not *stagger to and fro like a drunken man*, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. If you be not in Christ—washed in his blood, and decked in *his* righteousness, you will be undone for ever; *for our God is a consuming fire.* He will lay *your* righteousness to the plummet; and if you have *offended in one point*, you shall be judged *guilty of all. Tekel* shall be pronounced upon you—*Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting.* Then *your covenant with death shall be disannulled* (says Isaiah) *and your agreement with hell shall not stand. The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies* in which you trusted, *and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.*

Would you, then, *escape the damnation of hell?* Hear what the Lord saith by his prophet. *A man* (the God-man, Christ Jesus) *shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.* Isa. 32. 2. Disown, then, all you have, and all you are; and put your only trust under the shadow of *his* wings: Then, *being justified by faith*, you shall *have peace with God*, both now, and evermore.

SERMON VIII.

EPHESIANS v. 14.

Awake, thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light.

IT needs no great ſtrength of argument to prove that *the whole world lieth in wickedneſs*, as daily experience fully evinces it. Even in this land, which is called *chriſtian*, does righteouſneſs abound? Do the people follow hard after God? Are they *denying* themſelves *of all ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts? Living righteouſly*, or juſtly, with reſpect to their neighbours, *ſoberly*, with reſpect to themſelves, *and godly*, with reſpect to God? With confuſion of face we muſt own that all vital religion, and the eſſential doctrines of the goſpel which alone can eſtabliſh it, are almoſt entirely exploded; being conſidered as the offspring of a delirious fancy, and an enthuſiaſtic brain.

Hence it is, that infidelity, and its twin-brother immorality, are flowing down our ſtreets, like a mighty torrent, ſweeping away whole multitudes to the bottomleſs pit. Can we walk abroad, without ſeeing brutal drunkards ſtaggering to and fro? Are not our ears wounded, every moment, with horrid execrations? How many millions are imprecating the vengeance of God, and with all the energy of their ſouls, calling upon him to damn their blood, and burn them in the loweſt hell? May we not juſtly ſay with the prophet of old,

Becauſe

Because of swearing, the land mourneth? Beside the numberless petty crimes which men are guilty of, are not robberies, murders, and adultery daily committed? And (oh horrible to think!) will they not even glory in their shame? Does not their practice plainly cry out, in the language of hardened Pharaoh, *Who is the Lord, that we should obey his voice? We know not the Lord.* Such disgrace has this degenerate age cast upon the ways and servants of God, that I may well take up the complaint of Jeremiah, and ask, *To whom shall I speak, and give warning that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken—the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, and they have no delight in it.* Oh, what darkness covers the earth! What gross darkness the people! With the point of a diamond is sin graven upon the tables of their hearts. Alienated from the life of God, and past all feeling, they give themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. The devil, who is *the god of this world*, and *the prince of darkness*, has spread a veil of unbelief over their hearts, and a mist over the eyes of their understanding, so that they are blind, knowing nothing, and incapable of discerning the light of the glorious gospel of Christ. From the least to the greatest, they are all going after their idols—no man repenteth him of his wickedness, saying, what have I done? but every one turneth to his course, as the warhorse rusheth into the battle. Fearless of death and hell, they rush upon the thick bosses of God's buckler, and bid defiance to Omnipotence itself. They have so frequently *resisted* and *grieved* the spirit of God, which has been striving with them, that it seems entirely *quenched*. And 'tis much to

be

be feared, that numbers are given up to ſtrong deluſions, that they ſhould believe lies. Becauſe their hearts are waxed groſs, and their ears heavy and duſt of hearing—becauſe they have wilfully cloſed their eyes, leſt they ſhould ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their hearts, and ſhould be converted, and healed, the Lord has poured out upon them the ſpirit of deep ſleep. Even many of thoſe who profeſs themſelves God's *watchmen*, are *blind and ignorant—ſleeping, lying down, loving to ſlumber.*—Iſa. 56. 10.——

What, then, can be done in ſuch deplorable circumſtances? It is like throwing pearls before ſwine, to offer a crucified Saviour, and his ſelf-denying doctrines to thoſe who are thus wallowing in the mire of ſenſuality, and trampling the moſt important truths of God beneath their unhallowed feet. They ſavour not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of men. And how can it be otherwiſe? They have no ſpiritual life or ſenſes; conſequently cannot feel the workings of God's ſpirit, nor perceive things which are entirely of a ſpiritual nature. You may flaſh hell-fire in their faces, but it will never make them wince—You may deſcant upon the glories of heaven, but they are deaf to the voice of the charmer, charm he never ſo wiſely. You may ſet before them the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge which are hid in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the bleſſings which reſult from godlineſs, but, alas! they have no comprehenſion of theſe matters.

"A Spartan (as ſome author remarks) having "long buſied himſelf about the carcaſe of a dead "man, to try if he could ſettle it firm, in an "upright poſture, perceiving how ineffectual his "endeavours

"endeavours proved, sometimes the head falling "into the bosom, sometimes the arms flagging "downwards, and the whole at last falling to the "ground, told the standers-by, *There is wanting "something within*, meaning a soul. Thus it is "in dealing with those who are *dead in trespasses "and sins*: If we endeavour to hold up their coun-"tenances heaven-ward, and would have them fix "their eye on eternity, we can't hold them to it "one moment—they presently incline towards "the earth again. If we would set them on their "feet, and make them upright, if we would set "their hands at work in deeds of righteousness, "justice, and truth, all is in vain, while there is "no spirit, nor principle of motion—something is "wanting within. If God's dreadful threatnings "be sounded in their ears with a voice of thunder, "they hear it not—if hell be set before their eyes, "they see it not—if a scourge be laid on their "backs, their dead flesh feels it not."

It is this torpor of soul, this stupid insensibility that renders their situation truly lamentable. Were they open to conviction, there might be hopes of their reformation: But they appear so callous, that nothing but the irresistable power of God can alarm or terrify them. The evil nature which they brought into the world is so strengthened and established by universal bad example, that they are now habituated to scenes of vice: And though they are led captive by the devil at his will, yet are they totally insensate—they know not that they are in bondage, or asleep in the arms of the wicked one.

However, as I am myself a monument of the long-suffering of God, who has plucked me as a

brand

brand out of the fire, and has thereby shewed his willingness to save the chief of sinners, I shall not despair of the conversion of others: Therefore, with hearty prayer for his blessing upon this work, I shall now attempt to rouse the drowsy torpid consciences of those who are going on still in their trespasses.

Well I know, O sinner, that he who tries to separate you from your beloved lusts, will be accounted cruel and uncharitable. But, am I to let your soul perish eternally for fear of putting you to some pain? Then would I be your enemy indeed. If one of your limbs was mortified, would you account the surgeon severe, who should offer to cut it off? Would you not rather look upon him as your benefactor, and kiss the hand which so kindly disjointed the corrupted member, and thus preserved your whole body from inevitable death? Now, is not the salvation of your immortal soul of infinitely greater moment? Surely, surely—It cannot then be saved, unless it be first cleansed from all filthiness. Sin is eating it up, as a moth doth a garment, or as rust consumes iron. While, therefore, as an instrument in the hand of the Lord, I am endeavouring, with the two-edged sword of his spirit, to cut away all corruption from your heart, bear with patience the amputation, that you may be finally saved, in the day of the Lord Jesus. It is better for you to enter into life halt and maimed, rather than having two hands and two eyes, to be cast into hell. It is better to suffer a little in time, by cutting off all your pleasing, profitable sins, than to suffer exquisite agony in that lake of fire, where the smoke of your torment would ascend up for ever and ever.

ALMIGHTY

ALMIGHTY GOD, Make bare thine arm—Come down with ſtrength on each obdurate ſinner. Clothe thou thy word with power, and accompany it with the demonſtration of thy ſpirit. Let it be as a fire burning up all the ſtubble of ſin, and as an hammer, breaking the ſtony rocks in pieces. Lord, I am drawing my bow at a venture—Oh, do thou direct the arrows. Dip them in the blood of ſprinkling, and fix them in the hearts of the ungodly—Let them pierce deep between the joints of the harneſs, that when the wounded cry, and the ſlaughter is made in the midſt of the nations, the iſles may ſhake at the ſound of their fall, and tremble before thee who woundeſt, and healeſt, who killeſt, and makeſt alive.——

O ye ſons of Belial, quake for fear. Ye ſerpents, ye generation of vipers, begotten by the old dragon, how can ye eſcape the damnation of hell? O ye Belſhazzars, who are living in rioting and drunkenneſs, in chambering and wantonneſs, methinks, while the hand-writing of ordinances is ſtill in force againſt you, and the curſe of God is in your habitation, that your countenances ſhould be changed—your thoughts troubled—the joints of your loins looſed, and your knees ſmiting one againſt another. Sinners, are ye lulled in fleſh-pleaſing ſecurity, while the vengeance of a powerful God is impending over your defenceleſs heads? Are ye lying down at eaſe, regardleſs of the fire which the breath of the Lord has kindled to receive you? Are ye faſt aſleep, inattentive to the dreadful ſtorm which is blowing around you, and which will ſcatter you, like chaff before the wind? O ſenſeleſs, infatuated creatures! What ſhall I thunder in your ears to make you hear! What ſhall I ſay to ſtir up your lifeleſs conſciences!

Oh

Oh that my voice were as ſeven trumpets, or as the ſound of many waters, that I might rouſe you from your fatal lethargy! Oh that my words were like lightning, to pierce your very ſouls, and raiſe you from the earth, where ye lie grovelling with the ſerpent, which firſt ſeduced, and ſtill deceives mankind! Awake, all ye that dwell on earth —ariſe, ye dead men, and live. Awake ye drunkards—and weep, and howl, for your ſins in *time*; leſt in *eternity*, ye drink, at the hand of the Lord, the cup of his fury, and wring out the dregs of the cup of trembling. *Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of ſtrength to mingle ſtrong drink.* Iſa. 5. 22. Then *be not deceived*, for it is written by the God of unchangeable truth, *no drunkard ſhall inherit the kingdom of God.* 1 Cor. 6. 10.

The ſame ſtatute is alſo levelled againſt all the *covetous*, all *idolaters*, *fornicators*, *adulterers*, *liars*, *extortioners*, *and revilers*. Rev. 21. 8. Awake then ſpeedily from that dream which the father of lies has infuſed into your heads; whereby ye are made to believe, that though ye are following a multitude to do evil, and are walking in the broad road that leads to deſtruction, yet ye ſhall be aſſuredly ſaved, with thoſe happy *few*, who are walking in the highway of holineſs, that narrow path which leads to everlaſting life. But oh! ſtart up from your trance—For YOU *hell is enlarging itſelf, and opening its mouth without meaſure.* Therefore, leſt ye fall into it before ye are aware, awake out of the cradle of the devil, where ye have been ſo long rocked aſleep. *As when an hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he awaketh, and his ſoul is empty; or as when a thirſty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh, but he awaketh, and is faint,*

and

and his ſoul hath appetite: So ſhall the multitude of all the nations be that fight againſt God, and *mount Zion.* Iſa. 29. 8. Ye ſhall find at laſt, when ye lift up your eyes in torments among damned ſpirits, that ye are now in a dreadful deluſion, and that all your hopes of heaven are entirely imaginary—are only the phantaſms of ſpiritual ſleep.

Ye, alſo, who have been from your childhood, ſlumbering in the downy bed of *formality*, awake, awake. The tempter has been ſinging a pleaſing lullaby to your ſouls, *crying peace, peace, when there is no peace.* Ye imagine that ye *are rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing:* But alas! ye *are poor, and miſerable, and blind, and naked.* Ye are walking in the light of your own fire, and compaſſing yourſelves about with ſparks of your own kindling: But *this ſhall ye have of mine hand, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow.* Iſa. 50. 11. *There is one who accuſeth you, even Moſes, in whom ye truſt.* If ye have not exactly fulfilled the whole moral law, your boaſted righteouſneſs will avail you nothing.

Lukewarm profeſſors, who are ſpeaking with a double heart, divided between God and the world, let me call upon you, alſo, to awake *Becauſe ye are neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue you out of my mouth,* ſaith the jealous God. Ye have a name among men to live, but behold, ye are almoſt dead, even as others. Oh *be watchful* then, *and ſtrengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die.* Remember that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Therefore let thoſe who are of the day, and children of the light, watch and be ſober. Let them not ſleep, as do others, who are children of the night, and of darkneſs. Dwell no longer at eaſe in Zion, nor

ſettle thus upon your lees. *The man that wandereth out of the way of underſtanding, ſhall remain in the congregation of the dead.* Take heed, then, leſt ye ſtart aſide from the holy commandment delivered to you, and the Lord lead you forth with the workers of iniquity. Oh beware, leſt your fruit wither, and ye become *trees twice dead*, and be plucked up by the roots, to be caſt into everlaſting burning. Solomon aſſures you, that *ſlothfulneſs caſteth into a deep ſleep*, and that *he who ſleepeth in harveſt, is a ſon that cauſeth ſhame.* This is the time to lay up in ſtore for yourſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come. Catch, therefore, the favourable gales of opportunity, and wiſely learn to redeem the time. Work now, as diligent labourers, in the harveſt of your Lord—work while it is called to day—while the ſeaſons of grace laſt; before the night overtakes you, wherein no man can work. *The ſluggard will not plough by reaſon of the cold, therefore ſhall he beg in harveſt, and have nothing.* Prov. 20. 4. And is not this your caſe, ye careleſs, indolent profeſſors? If ye will not ſtir up the gift of God that is in you, and keep the lamp of love continually burning, when the heavenly bridegroom comes, and they that are ready ſhall go in with him to the marriage, the doors of heaven ſhall be ſhut againſt you. Then, like the fooliſh virgins, ye will be ſaying, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*; but Chriſt will thus anſwer you, *Verily, I know you not whence ye are.* Oh, what a melancholy reflection is it, that numbers ſhall come to the very gates of heaven, and yet be baniſhed with an everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power! O captive daughter of Zion, looſe thyſelf from the bands of thy neck.

Awake—

awake—put on again thy ſtrength—*Ariſe, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.*

The ſound of the goſpel, which has roufed ſo many others from their ſupineneſs, has only lulled you into a deep ſleep, ſo that ye may be taken up for dead, like Eutychus, when he fell down from the third loft, while Paul was long preaching. But, as the apoſtle by embracing him, reſtored him to life, ſo may the Lord, while I am calling upon you, once more breathe his ſpirit into you, that ye may live as becomes thoſe who are alive from the dead, and your friends in Jeſus may be comforted over you. Acts 20. 9, &c. O thou God of all grace, haſten that happy predicted æra, when *none ſhall be weary, nor ſtumble amongſt us, when none ſhall ſlumber nor ſleep, neither ſhall the girdle of our loins be loofed, nor the latchet of our ſhoes be broken.* Iſa. 5. 27.

As for the hypocrites in Zion, falſe brethren who have crept in unawares, what ſhall I ſay unto you? Let fearfulneſs and trembling ſeize upon you—God is near in your mouth, but far from your reins. Ye are hearers of the word, but not doers of it. *Awake to righteouſneſs, and ſin no more: For there is nothing covered that ſhall not be revealed—nothing hid that ſhall not be known.* The Searcher of hearts will bring all the hidden things of diſhoneſty to light, and will expoſe your ſecret actions before the whole aſſembled world: And, becauſe ye knew your Maſter's will, and did it not, but were diſſemblers before God, ye *ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.* Hell, like Nebuchadnezzar's burning fiery furnace, ſhall be heated ſeven times hotter to receive you.

Sinners of every rank, awake, awake. Groan out your ſouls in prayer to God, that he may

ſtretch forth his mighty arm, and raiſe you from this ſlumber, in which ye have been ſo long lying ſtupified. Cry unto him that he may looſe the bandage with which ſatan has blindfolded your eyes, that ye may ſee, and know, the day of your viſitation. If ye hear not the voice of the Son of God, and of his meſſengers, while in the land of the living, there is no repentance in the grave to which ye are haſtening. That is *the land where all things are forgotten:* And *as the tree falls, ſo will it lie.* As death leaves you, ſo will judgment find you, and *they that have done evil ſhall come forth out of their graves, unto the reſurrection of damnation.* Yield then to the invitations of a long-ſuffering God, who waits to be gracious—yield to the ſupplications of his miniſter, who earneſtly implores you, with all the bowels of pity, to *flee from the wrath to come.* Awake, ye young men, and maidens. Before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh when ye ſhall ſay, ye have no pleaſure in them, remember now your Creator in the days of your youth. Ye cannot crown it with a fairer garland than piety. Dedicate then unto God the prime of your life, and wait at wiſdom's door. If ſinners entice you, conſent not unto them, for their ways lead down to the chambers of death, and miſery. Remember that the pleaſures of ſin are but for a ſeaſon—whereas the torments of hell are eternal. Be not, therefore, carried away with youthful luſts which war againſt the ſoul. *As a bird haſteth to the ſnare, and knoweth not that it is for his life,* ſo are ye haſtening to the pit of deſtruction, though ye ſeem not to be ſenſible of your danger. Ye are *going as an ox to the ſlaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the*

ſtocks,

flocks, while ye are *living in pleasure on the earth*. All such, says the apostle, are *dead while they live*.

Grey-headed men, and aged women, it is high time at least for *you*, to awake out of sleep. *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and ye are not saved.* Jer. 8. 20. The day of your life is far spent—the shadows of the evening are now come upon you—and the night of your dissolution is just at hand. Your years, your weeks are almost extinct—your breath is already corrupt, and worms are ready for you, gaping for their prey. As the Lord liveth, there is but a step between you and death, and another between death and hell. The avenger of blood is at your heels—Oh fly, fly for your life, lest he overtake you, and bring down your grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. *The hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness*: Prov. 16. 31. But, if it be found in the way of wickedness, it is a crown of shame. Now why tarry ye? Arise, and be baptized with the Holy Ghost, in the laver of regeneration, and wash away your sins, calling upon the name of Jesus, the Lord of life. What! Old sinners, are ye content to die without being *born again*? Oh, pray heartily unto the Lord of the vineyard, that he may call you in now, even now, at the eleventh hour, to labour in his service. Peradventure he may hire you: And if ye be faithful in doing his work during your short continuance here, ye shall be buried in a good old age—shall go to your fathers in peace, and obtain a reward with those that have borne the heat and burden of the day.

Oh that the Lord would now *roar out of Zion*, and raise each sleepy sinner from the dead! Hark! sinner, the tempest howls—the sky is black with

fury—the ſwelling waves of incenſed wrath are opening to ſwallow thee up, and thou art quite compoſed. Let me cry unto thee, as the mariners did unto Jonah, *What meaneſt thou, O ſleeper? Ariſe—call upon thy God, if ſo be that God will think upon thee, that thou periſh not.* Ho! God the Father calls, with all the earneſtneſs of compaſſion, *Turn thou, turn thou from thine evil ways, for why wilt thou die?* Ho! God the Son proclaims, *Repent—believe on me, and thou ſhalt have eternal life:* Ho! God the Holy Ghoſt implores thee thus, *Awake, thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light.*

Now, wilt thou harden thine heart againſt the preſſing entreaties of the triune God? Wilt thou reſiſt theſe gracious calls? Art thou madly reſolved to continue deaf to all the ſollicitations that can poſſibly be made! Then truly deſperate is thy caſe. If ſuch be thy determination, the jealous God may this day ſwear in his wrath, that thou ſhalt not enter into his reſt. Oh think how dreadful it would be, if God ſhould ſay within himſelf, That ſinner has ſo long rebelled againſt me, and done ſuch deſpite unto the ſpirit of my grace, that I will give him over to a reprobate mind. His eyes ſhall not ſee—his ears ſhall hear no more the merciful offers of reconcilement which I have made to him, thro' the blood of the everlaſting covenant. He ſhall have no intereſt in the redemption that is in Chriſt, my beloved ſon. I will ſeal him up in impenitence of heart, 'till he fills up the meaſure of his iniquities. Then ſhall he give up the ghoſt without hope—horror and deſpair ſhall compaſs him about on every ſide. He ſhall lie down in the grave, but only to riſe again to an awful tribunal, at which he ſhall meet an angry

angry Judge, who ſhall ſentence him to the flames of hell, where his body and ſoul ſhall burn in torments, that ſhall never, never, never have an end.

O ſinner, does not thine heart recoil within thee at the very thought? Does not thine inmoſt ſoul ſtart back, and cry, Forbid it, moſt merciful God—Save, Lord, or I periſh—O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death?

If, in bitterneſs of ſpirit, and deep conviction, thou art thus calling upon the Lord, I am commiſſioned to tell thee that *Jeſus Chriſt is exalted on high a Prince and a Saviour, to give thee repentance, and remiſſion of ſins.* O joyful news! glad tidings indeed! Receive them with tranſport, with tears of gratitude. If thou art praying with David, *Lighten mine eyes, that I ſleep not the ſleep of death,* remember the declaration of God by his prophet, when ſpeaking of Chriſt, the friend of ſinners. *I give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the priſoners, and them that ſit in darkneſs, from the priſon-houſe.* Iſa. 42. 6. And what ſays Chriſt himſelf unto thee? *I am the light of the world—he that believeth on, and followeth me, ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life.* If, therefore, like the blind men, ſpoken of by the Evangeliſts, thou crieſt unto Jeſus, "*Thou ſon of David, have mercy on me,*" according to thy faith, it ſhall be unto thee: Firmly believing as they did, thine intellectual eyes ſhall be opened, to diſcern the things pertaining to thine everlaſting peace. Thou ſhalt have a clear view of thoſe celeſtial glories which God hath prepared for them that love and obey him. Thou art now, as *a*

blind

blind man groping for the wall; but when the Lord lifts upon thee the light of his countenance, thou ſhalt ſee out of obſcurity, and ſhalt be led in paths thou haſt not known. *The day-ſpring from on high* ſhall viſit thee, and be a lantern unto thy feet, directing thee in wiſdom's ways. He that is *the morning-ſtar* ſhall overpower thee with his glory. Through the reviving, genial warmth of his preſence, thine heart, which may now be oppoſitely compared to a heavy, dark, black coal, ſhall be kindled, and burn within thee; and the ſmoke thereof ſhall aſcend to heaven, as a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour before God. As the bright ſhining of a candle gives light to every corner of a room, ſo will the Lord Chriſt irradiate thy benighted ſoul. That *Sun of righteouſneſs*, who has aſcended on high, and blazes forth with ſplendor in the firmament of the third heavens, will ariſe upon thee *with healing under his wings*. He will cauſe thy righteouſneſs to go forth as brightneſs, and thy ſalvation as a lamp that burneth. The gloom of nature ſhall be diſperſed—thy ſpiritual darkneſs ſhall become as the noon-day—yea, as the light of the morning ſhalt thou be, even a morning without clouds. The ſcales of ignorance ſhall be taken away by the ſpirit of our God, ſo that, with open face, beholding, as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, thou ſhalt be changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory.

O ſeeking ſinner, if thou perceiveſt the leaſt dawning of grace, conſider it as a token for good: And tho' Chriſt does not come with that full light which thine heart could wiſh, yet wait patiently for farther illumination. It is ſome time before the luminary which lightens this terreſtrial ſyſtem

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arrives to its meridian luſtre. Children muſt learn to walk, before they can run, and muſt be fed with *milk*, not with *meat*. Thy dim-ſighted underſtanding could not bear the powerful effulgence of the goſpel—Its glories are too dazzling to look upon all at once. At preſent, thou wilt ſee but indiſtinctly. Thou art in the ſame ſituation with him, who ſaid (when Jeſus firſt ſpit upon his eyes) *I ſee men as trees walking*; but when Chriſt continues to *anoint* thee with his *eye-ſalve*, thou wilt then clearly diſcern the way wherein thou oughteſt to go.

When an oculiſt takes a blind man under his care, he firſt cuts away the groſs film that obſtructed the viſual rays; and then applies things of a ſtrengthning nature, 'till, by degrees the patient is enabled to look with ſome ſteadineſs. At firſt, he diſtinguiſhes large objects though confuſedly; But, at laſt, he is brought to ſee the minuteſt things, in their proper colours, ſhapes, and motions. Thus is it with the ſpiritually blind—Their ſight muſt be gradually opened. Their grace and knowledge increaſe, in proportion to their faith. *The path of the juſt*, ſays Solomon, *is as a ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more, unto the perfect day.* Prov. 4. 18.

Art thou ſtill doubting in thine heart whether theſe things are ſo? Oh why wilt thou ſo long reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt? Wherefore doſt thou doubt, O thou of little faith? Has not God power to ſave, even unto the uttermoſt, any ſinner that truſts in him? Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Surely, all things are poſſible with him. He is able out of the very ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham. May not he who turned water into wine, turn alſo, thy diſobedient heart to the wiſdom of the juſt?

just? Be thou but willing, and it shall be done. Cannot he who raised Lazarus from the grave, where he had lain for three days, quicken thee, by his spirit? Is it harder for the Lord to create an ungodly soul anew in righteousness, than it was to create this earth, and all the things that are therein? If it be, it is not because the Lord's arm is shortened, so as that it cannot save; but because thou, O sinner, art unwilling to come unto him that thou mightest have life, and hardenest thine heart against him, like the Israelites, *in the day of provocation.* God can work irresistibly upon matter. He formed the heavens, and all their shining hosts, by the word of his mouth. He said, *Let there be light, and there was light.* But, with intelligent creatures, he acts in a different manner. He sets before them life and death, good and evil, blessing and cursing, and desires them to *chuse life, that they may live.* If, therefore, they will not receive his proffered mercies, they must acquit him, and own their damnation just, when he pronounces that tremendous sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil, and his angels.*

Now, *who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?* Reader, canst thou? Is thy strength the strength of stones? Or is thy flesh of brass? Though it were, yet it never could withstand the fire of hell: And yet, art thou madly rushing headlong into the unquenchable flames? For the Lord's sake, for thy soul's sake, stop short in the midst of thy impetuous career, and consider where it will end. Oh turn your course—immediately turn unto God with full purpose, and resolution of heart. And he *who commanded the light to shine*

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out of darkneſs will ſhine into thy heart to give thee the knowledge of the glory of God, ſhining in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. 2 Cor. 4. 6. And *in that day*, the day of thy new creation, *it ſhall be ſaid unto thee, Ariſe, ſhine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee.* Iſa. 60. 1.

Oh be not faithleſs, but believing. What mighty power is aſcribed to faith! *If thou canſt believe*, ſays our Saviour, *all things are poſſible to him that believeth.* Mark 9. 23. *Though he were dead*, adds he, *yet ſhall he live.* When the children of Iſrael were captives in the province of Babylon, they ſaw not the leaſt probability of their deliverance, and therefore ſaid, *Our bones are dried, and our hope is loſt—we are cut off for our parts.* But what ſaid the Lord unto them? *O ye dry bones, hear ye the word of the Lord. Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cauſe you to come up out of them. And I will lay ſinews upon you, and will bring up fleſh upon you, and cover you with ſkin, and put breath in you, and ye ſhall live. And I will place you in your own land, and ye ſhall know that I am the Lord.* Ezek. 37. 4, &c.

In like manner, the Lord will undertake thy cauſe, O ſinner, if thou art weary of the captivity in which thou art held by ſin and ſatan. If thou ſeeſt thyſelf a fallen creature, and haſt given up all hopes of ſalvation, but thro' the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt. Behold, the Father of mercies will raiſe thee from the grave of nature, will cloathe thee with his righteouſneſs, and will put his ſpirit within thee, by the witneſs of which thou ſhalt know that he is the Lord who *raiſeth the dead*, and that thou thyſelf art *paſſed from death unto life.* Yes—he will give unto thee the ſpirit of truth, and quicken thy mortal body, raiſ-

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ing thee up together with his ſaints, to ſit in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus. Though, like Peter, James, and John, when their Lord was tranſfigured upon the mount, thou art *heavy with ſleep*, yet when thou awakeſt, thou ſhalt ſee his glory. Then ſhall thine eyes, which were blind to all evangelical doctrine, behold the comelineſs that is in Chriſt, and in his light ſee light. Then ſhall thine ears which have been ſo long deaf to the ſound of the goſpel trumpet, and to the voice of the Almighty God, be unſtopped, and hear with meekneſs the ingrafted word. Then ſhall thy feet which have been ſwift to ſhed blood, run on in the way of God's commandments. Then ſhall thy tongue, once dumb, while the children of God lifted up their voices in praiſe, joyfully ſing with them in the courts of Jehovah, and blaſphemous oaths ſhall be turned into ſhouts of gratitude, and hallelujahs to the mighty Redeemer. In thine heart, once a barren wilderneſs, which brought forth nothing but evil fruit, ſhall a well of water break out, ſpringing up into everlaſting life. The heavens ſhall pour down refreſhing dew on the parched ground, and make thy ſoul *like Eden, the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladneſs ſhall be found therein—thankſgiving, and the voice of melody.*

Oh that any expoſtulations of mine could influence ſome poor ſinner to ſeek theſe precious bleſſings! But 'tis God alone that can *perſuade Japheth.* Therefore to him will I turn in prayer.

Gird thy ſword upon thy thigh, O moſt mighty God, and, in thy majeſty, ride proſperouſly over every rebellious unconverted ſoul. At the ſhining of thy glittering ſpear, let the people bow before thee—let the nations ſerve thee—let

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thine enemies lick the duſt. According to the working whereby thou art able to ſubdue all things unto thyſelf, turn them, O Lord, and ſo ſhall they be turned. Send out thy light, and thy truth. Quicken them, that they may call upon thy name, and that all the ends of the earth may ſee the ſalvation of our God. Thou that dwelleſt between the cherubims, ſhine forth, ſtir up thy ſtrength, and come and ſave them. Oh take away their hearts of ſtone, and give them hearts of fleſh. Awaken them with that mighty voice which divideth the flames of fire, and ſhaketh the wilderneſs of Kadeſh. Say to the priſoners, Come forth —ſay unto them that ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, Shew yourſelves, let thy candle ſhine bright upon them, and give them the light of thy grace here, and the light of thy glory hereafter, through Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord.

SERMON IX.

2 CORINTHIANS v. 17.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature—old things are past away—behold! all things are become new.

WHEN recounting the sins of Jerusalem, God, speaking by his prophet, remarks, that *her priests put no difference between the holy and profane, between the unclean and the clean:* And in another part of Ezekiel's prophecy, where the Lord is laying down rules for the priests, he says, *They shall cause my people to discern between the holy and profane*, &c. 22. 26.—44. 23.—In like manner, he addresses Jeremiah, saying, *If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth.* 15. 19.——

Hence it appears, that there are but two generations of men, *children of God, and children of the devil:* And herein (says St. John) *are they manifest, Whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God*, but *he that committeth sin is of the devil.* 1 John 3. 8, 10.

Some, perhaps, are now ready to cry out, What! Do not all commit sin? Let the apostle answer for himself. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not—whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* 1 John 3. 9, 6.

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And as he well knew this doctrine would meet with much oppoſition from carnally minded profeſſors, he thus ſets the ſaints of God upon their guard againſt them, *Little children, let no man deceive you—he that doth righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he* (God) *is righteous.* 3. 7.—This momentous truth he enforces ſtill further in theſe words, *We know that whoſoever is born of God ſinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himſelf, and that wicked-one toucheth him not.* And then he immediately adds, *We know that we are of God; but the whole world,* (comparatively ſpeaking) *lieth in wickedneſs.* 1 John 5. 18, 19.——

Thus this great apoſtle, in conjunction with all the reſt, whoſe epiſtles are handed down to the churches of Chriſt as the ſtandard of truth, makes a material diſtinction between the righteous and the unrighteous, thoſe that are of the world, and thoſe that are of God. It is, therefore, with much heart-felt concern, that I have heard many of the clergy addreſſing their congregations indiſcriminately, as if they were all chriſtians; and applying the great and precious promiſes of the goſpel to them, for no other reaſon but becauſe they were called by the name of Chriſt. Surely, then, it cannot be ſaid, that theſe are *workmen rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving unto every one their portion of meat in due ſeaſon.* If they duly conſidered the immoral lives of moſt of their hearers, inſtead of comforting them, by falſly aſſuring them, they were *all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus,* they would plainly declare that the greateſt part of them were *of their Father the devil, for his works they did. Know ye not* (ſays St. Paul) *that to whom ye yield yourſelves*

ſervants to obey, his ſervants ye are whom ye obey? Now God and the devil are the two maſters who ſhare the world between them. We muſt belong either to the one or the other; for, we cannot ſerve them both at the ſame time. Their commands are entirely contradictory; conſequently, if we love and hold to the one, we muſt neceſſarily hate and deſpiſe the other. Mat. 6. 24. Our Saviour informs us, that *a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.* Each will produce fruit peculiar to itſelf, of the ſame colour, ſcent, and flavour. Thus, the *natural*, and the *ſpiritual* man, in their outward walk and converſation, always ſhew tempers and diſpoſitions agreeable to their different natures; and there is an uniform conſiſtency in all their actions: They are either univerſally *wicked*, or univerſally *righteous*; for 'tis morally impoſſible that we can be the ſervants of *ſin*, and the ſervants of righteouſneſs, at the very ſame period of our lives. We muſt be actuated either by the ſpirit of the Holy God, or by the ſpirit of the wicked one, who, *as a ſtrong man armed, keeps his palace* in the heart of every unregenerate man. Surely, therefore, if the ſpirit of God dwell in us, we will naturally bring forth *the fruits of the ſpirit*; but if ſatan reign over us, our thoughts, our words, our actions will be diabolical; and all *the fruits of the fleſh* will grow from the evil root that is within. If we are *of the world*, all our views will be terminated by it, and our lives regulated by its maxims, and faſhions. Never looking beyond the grave (becauſe *the God of this world* blinds our eyes) we will do every thing with an intent to gratify our beſtial part, and to pleaſe our unſanctified hearts. Whatever promotes our pleaſure, honour,

honour, or ſecular advantage, will be greedily purſued. But if God has *choſen us out of the world*, and ſet up his kingdom of grace in our hearts, he will rule there unrivalled, *bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt*. As willing ſubjects we will gladly ſubmit to the gentle ſway of *the Prince of Peace*; and whatſoever we do, in word or deed, will be done with *a ſingle eye* to the glory of God, and the furtherance of our own ſalvation. Profeſſing ourſelves *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt*, on account of *our fellowſhip with the Father and the Son*, we will act as becomes the inhabitants of another world; and, like ſtrangers and ſojourners upon earth, will abſtain from all fleſhly luſts that war againſt the ſoul. In ſhort, *if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature —old things are paſt away—behold! all things are become new.*

We cannot read theſe words without plainly ſeeing that they preſuppoſe that all men are originally *out of Chriſt*, and that they retain their old carnal nature, until, by a living faith in him, they are made one with him, and ſo become *partakers of the divine nature*. This will appear more manifeſt, if we conſider ſome paſſages in St. Paul's Epiſtles to the ſeveral converted churches. Writing to the Romans, he ſays, *When ye were the ſervants of ſin, ye were free from righteouſneſs: But God be thanked, that though ye were the ſervants of ſin, yet ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from ſin, ye became ſervants of righteouſneſs, ſervants to God: Ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life.* Rom. 6. 17, &c. Of the Epheſians he thus ſpeaks. *You hath God quickened who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins,*

wherein in time past ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom, also, we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and were, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (for by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Eph. 2. 1, &c. In another place he also exhorts them after this manner. *This I say, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as others, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, thro' the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus, that ye put off, concerning the former conversation,* THE OLD MAN, *which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be* RENEWED *in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on* THE NEW MAN, *which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness.* Eph. 4. 17, &c. Of the Colossians he bears this witness. *You that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath Christ reconciled, in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreproveable in his sight. Mortify therefore, your members which are upon the earth, fornication,*

fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is idolatry: in the which ye walked ſometime, when ye lived in them: But now ye have put off all theſe, anger, wrath, malice, blaſphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Col. 1. 21, 22—3. 5, &c. And what is the record which he has given of himſelf, and of Titus, who was appointed a biſhop? In his epiſtle to him, he candidly acknowledged that they were once as wicked as others. *We ourſelves, alſo, were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, which he ſhed on us abundantly, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour; that, being juſtified by his grace, we ſhould be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.* Tit. 3. 3, &c.

From all theſe fore-cited quotations, it muſt be indiſputably concluded, that all men are *carnal, and ſold under ſin*, until they experience *the goſpel* to be *the power of God to their ſalvation* from the guilt, the puniſhment, and the dominion of ſin.

Some, indeed, endeavour to evade the force of this inference, by obſerving, that moſt of theſe, who embraced the faith of Chriſt, in the days of St. Paul, were *heathens*; and that they come not under the ſame predicament, as they have profeſſed chriſtianity from their infancy.

But, does not their practice give their profeſſion the lie? Wherein do they differ from the heathens? Have they not their idols ſet up in their hearts? Are they not equally addicted to *fornicati-*

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on, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is idolatry, for which things ſake the wrath of God cometh on the children of diſobedience? Do they not live in *anger, malice, and hatred?* Does not *blaſphemy, and filthy communication come out of their mouth?* They cannot deny that theſe things are ſo. Then it evidently follows, that they are *heathens* in reality, though they are *chriſtians* by name: And the propoſition laid down in the text, ſtill remains incontrovertible, *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature*, &c. Whoever is a chriſtian indeed, *as an obedient child, he does not faſhion himſelf according to his former luſts*, when in a ſtate of ignorance and rebellion againſt God; but as that *God who hath called him is holy, ſo is he holy in all manner of converſation.* But, if we deſcend to particulars, and point out in what reſpects he is *become a new creature*, we will be the better enabled to judge who it is that deſerves the glorious appellation of a chriſtian.

In the firſt place, then, he gets a *new name.* Before converſion, he *is without Chriſt, being an alien from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and a ſtranger from the covenants of promiſe: But now in Chriſt Jeſus, he who ſometimes was far off, is made nigh by the blood of Chriſt. Therefore, he is no more a ſtranger and foreigner, but a fellow citizen with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God.* Eph. 2. 12, 13, 19.—He was once called, *a ſervant of ſin, a ſon of Belial, a child of the devil, a child of wrath, a child of diſobedience, a child of the night and of darkneſs, a ſon of the bond-woman, born after the fleſh.* On account of his *earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh* diſpoſitions, he was compared by the ſacred writers to the moſt filthy, greedy, and venemous part of the brute creation,

creation, such as *swine, goats, dogs, serpents,* and *vipers.* But, in the day of his spiritual birth, these old names pass away, and he becomes one of the redeemed, and ransomed of the Lord—one of God's *peculiar* and *elect people*—of the *spiritual house*—of the *royal priesthood*—of the *holy nation.* He is said to be *a tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord—a servant of righteousness—a precious son of Zion, comparable to fine gold—a son of God—an heir of salvation—a joint heir with Christ—a friend of Christ—an obedient child—a child of the light, and of the day—a son of the free-woman, born after the spirit.* And, to shew his heavenly-mindedness, those names which are affixed to the gentlest animals are given to him. He is styled *a dove, a lamb, a sheep.* Hence our Saviour says, *To him that overcometh* the world, *will I give a white stone, and in the stone A NEW NAME written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.* Rev. 2. 17. In the oriental countries, it was customary to acquit, or condemn criminals, by giving them either *white,* or *black* stones. In allusion to this, he whom God justifies receives a token of his pardon (signified by the *white stone*) *even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: But you know him* (says Christ to every true follower of his) *for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* John 14. 17.——As it *bears witness with his spirit that he is a child of God,* being adopted into the Lord's family, his name is changed, a circumstance common even amongst men, when they commence heirs to estates to which they had no birth-right. Thus *Jacob,* after wrestling 'till the break of day with the angel, was called *Israel,* which signifies, *as a prince hast thou power with*

with God, and haſt prevailed. In like manner, the convinced ſinner that continues inſtant in prayer with God to make him *a partaker of the inheritance of the ſaints in light*, obtains the ſpirit of God *which is the earneſt of that inheritance*; and thus he ſtands related to God, as a ſon to a father. He *receives the ſpirit of adoption, whereby he crys, Abba, Father.* Rom. 8. 15.——

Again—he that is in Chriſt, has *new faculties.* He was once *without underſtanding*, even *as the horſe, or as the mule.* He was blind to every thing that was praiſe-worthy, and knew not the way of peace, nor the day of his viſitation. *The preaching of the croſs, and the things of the ſpirit of God were fooliſhneſs to him*—he could not diſcern them, becauſe he had no ſpiritual ſenſes. But, *now, the eyes of his underſtanding are enlightened*, ſo that he *knows what is the hope of his calling, and the exceeding greatneſs of God's power to them that believe.* All the words of wiſdom's mouth are now plain to him. Chriſt no more ſpeaks as in *parables* to him, but the ſpirit of counſel and of knowledge reſting upon him, he can unfold *the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven*, and give a well-grounded *reaſon of the hope that is in him.* The ſcripture is no longer *a ſealed book* to him, for the Lion of the tribe of Judah has *unlooſed the ſeals*—has taken the ſcales from his eyes: And he clearly ſees the things which God has prepared for them that love him. *God reveals them to him by his ſpirit*—that ſpirit *which ſearcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.* He diſcovers ſuch amiableneſs, ſuch excellency and beauty in Chriſt, and in the way of ſalvation appointed by God, as fills his new-born ſoul with wonder. He experimentally knows that all the treaſures of grace and glory are hid

lord in the Lord Jeſus, out of whoſe fulneſs he daily receives ſupplies for all his ſpiritual wants. By the light of the glorious goſpel, he is *able to comprehend with all ſaints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of God, which paſſeth* human *knowledge.*

With regard to his *memory*, how ſurprizing is the change! He did not once like to retain God in his thoughts. If at any time he looked into the ſcriptures, he could ſcarce recollect a ſingle paſſage; but how tenacious was his memory of every filthy jeſt, or idle ſtory, that he read in plays and romances! After coming from the theatre, he could repeat all the double-entendres, and obſcene ſpeeches, that he heard there; but he could not bring from the ſanctuary of the Lord, the text or heads of a ſermon. But *now, there is no remembrance of former things*—they are paſſed away as water—His memory is retentive only of the inſtructions of wiſdom—he meditates upon the law of his Lord day and night; and he can ſay with David, *If I forget thee, O Jeruſalem, let my right hand forget her cunning—If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jeruſalem above my chief joy.* Pſal. 137. 5, 6.

His *conſcience*, alſo, is become *new*. It was once *hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin—ſeared as with an hot iron*. It was almoſt *paſt feeling*, ſo that he could *ſwallow down camels*—commit the moſt atrocious crimes without the leaſt remorſe. But *now*, it is "quick as the apple of an eye, the leaſt approach of ſin to feel." He keeps it *void of offence towards God, and towards man*. He has ſuch a ſenſibility of the holy nature of God, and of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, that he *abſtains from*

from the very appearance of evil. He *ſtrains at a gnat*—is fearful of breaking the leaſt commandment of God, that he may not be *called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven.* Mat. 5. 19.——Even in things lawful he bridles his appetite—and ſtriving for the maſtery, keeps his body under, and brings it into ſubjection, leſt, after a promiſe being left him of entering into God's reſt, he ſhould at laſt fall ſhort of it. Nay, he has ſuch a filial fear of offending his heavenly Father, that he often gives way to needleſs tormenting ſcrupuloſity, which *the accuſer of the brethren* ſuggeſts to him, in hopes, if poſſible, to make him grow *weary of well-doing.* But, *his rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of his conſcience, that in ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, he has his converſation in this world.* 2 Cor. 1. 12.

The *will*, likewiſe, that leading power, which was headſtrong, perverſe, and refractory, is *now* brought into ſubjection. It once hated knowledge, and did not chuſe the fear of the Lord: But *now* it yields ſweet obedience to the word of God, and approves thoſe things that are moſt excellent. The renewed man would rather be a door-keeper in the houſe of the Lord, than dwell in the tents of ungodlineſs. With Moſes, he chuſes rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy all the pleaſures of ſin. As Chriſt has ſuffered for him in the fleſh, he arms himſelf likewiſe with the ſame mind; that he ſhould no longer live the reſt of his time in the fleſh to the luſts of men, but to the will of God. The time paſt of his life ſuffices to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when he walked in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of wine, revellings, banquettings, and other abomi-

nable

able idolatries. It is *now* his meat and drink to do the will of God, who has raiſed him up to be a ſhining light in his generation. His will is ſo ſwallowed up in God's, that in the moſt diſaſtrous circumſtances of life, even when the Lord ſeems to have forſaken him, he ſtill cries out, Father, not my will, but thine be done—It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good.

And whence proceeds this reſignation? From the change of his *heart*, and *affections*: for theſe are entirely *become new*. When Saul was anointed king over Iſrael, we are told that *God gave him another heart*: And thus does he deal with every man that is *made a king and prieſt unto God*. By nature, his heart was uncircumciſed, deviſing wicked imaginations. It was fully ſet in him to do evil, and was exerciſed with covetous practices, being deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked. The door thereof was ſhut, and would not open to the merciful God, who ſo often ſtood knocking at it, and demanding entrance. It was as firm as a ſtone, yea, as hard as the nether millſtone. But *now* the Lord has given him another heart, even *an heart of fleſh*, ſuſceptible of the moſt tender impreſſions. It now melts before the Sun of righteouſneſs, as wax melteth before the fire. Softened by divine grace, it is always in a pliable ſtate to take the mould divine. Out of the evil treaſure of his heart, he once brought forth evil things; but now, out of the good treaſure of his heart, he bringeth forth good things. He was once ſlow of heart to believe either the promiſes, or the threatnings of God; but *now* in an honeſt and good heart, having heard the word, he keeps it, and brings forth fruit with patience. He was once a lover of pleaſure more than a lover of God.

He

He loved the world, and the things that were in the world; and therefore the love of the Father was not in him. He was given up to vile inordinate affections, but now the flesh is crucified with all its lusts, and his affections are set on things above. He now loves the house of God, and the place where his honour dwelleth—his soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. *His idols of silver, and his idols of gold, he casts to the moles and the bats.* He says with Ephraim, *What have I to do with you any more, my idols?* They are all thrown down before the living God, to whom he has surrendered his heart. The love of God is now the reigning passion there. Other lords once had the dominion over him; but now the Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has gotten himself the victory. He delighteth himself in the Lord, and seeketh for closer communion with him more earnestly than the miser seeketh for hidden treasures. The law of the Lord is far more precious in his sight than rubies—it is dearer to him than thousands of gold and silver. He counts the favour of the Highest better than the life itself; and is eagerly panting after the full image of God. He longs to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength.

But his *heart* is renewed in other respects, also. Being born again of God, he loveth every man that is begotten of the same Father; so that his *companions* are *new*. Once he was pleased with the society of the workers of iniquity—he was a reviler, and a persecutor of good men: But *now*, like Saul of Tarsus, his delight is with the saints that are on the earth, and with such as excel in virtue.

virtue. With these he takes sweet counsel, and they go up to the house of God together as friends.

What is still more amazing, *he loves his enemies.* He blesses them that curse him, and prays for them that despitefully use, and persecute him. That heart which before was the seat of malice, hatred, strife, revenge, now harbours the opposite graces. Gentleness, peace, long-suffering are the blessed fruits which spring up in his inmost soul, and are observable in all his demeanor. Out of the abundance of his sanctified heart, his mouth speaks; and *love*, that pure disinterested love, which *is the fulfilling of the law*, shews itself in all his transactions with men.

In short, all *old things are past* away—his old thoughts, words, deeds are remembred no more. *Behold! all things are become new.* His ways, maxims, principles, are as different from what they were formerly, as light is from darkness. He is influenced by new motives—he acts by new regulations, with new aims, and among new friends. Having left *the world* that *lieth in wickedness*, he is, as it were, the citizen of a new world, *wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

Now, this transformation is visible to every one; as the apostle intimates in that emphatical word of the text, *Behold!* All his former acquaintances are called to look upon the alteration which grace has made in him. See there—the lion is turned into a lamb. Behold! the drunkard, the swearer, the liar, is become sober, chaste, godly, and a lover of the truth. He that stole steals no more. He now *serves God, in newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.* All *the old leaven of malice and wickedness is purged away, and he is become a new lump.* He has come out from a-

mong the wicked, and is ſeparate from ſinners; ſo that *all the people* (who knew his former evil courſe of life) *are filled with wonder and amazement, at that which has happened unto him*, and are obliged to confeſs that he is indeed *a new creature*. As great a miracle has been wrought on him as on the deaf, the dumb, the blind, in the days of our Saviour. His ears hear the voice of the Son of God—his tongue is looſed to praiſe the Lord—his eyes are opened to ſee the way of everlaſting life. No one who has the leaſt ſincerity can deny it; ſo that the miniſter, who has been the happy inſtrument of thus turning him from the power of ſatan unto God, may adopt the words of St. Paul to ſome of his converts, *you are my epiſtle*, KNOWN AND READ OF ALL MEN—*you are manifeſtly declared to be the epiſtle of Chriſt, miniſtred by me, written not with ink, but with the ſpirit of the living God, not in tables of ſtone, but in fleſhy tables of the heart.* 2 Cor. 3. 2, 3.———

Reader, what ſay you to thoſe things? Are you *in Chriſt?* Are you what you pretend to be, *a chriſtian?* Are *old things paſt away, and all things become new in you?* Are you totally reformed in heart and life? And does it appear to all with whom you have any connexion in the world? Theſe are important queſtions, and demand your moſt ſerious attention. For, if you are not thus *created anew in Chriſt Jeſus*, you are treading upon the brink of hell—you are on the very verge of deſtruction, and muſt periſh for ever, except you take timely warning. Let theſe awful words of him who is to ſit in judgment on your ſoul, be ever ringing in your ears, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. You muſt*

be

be born again. John 3. 5, 7. *You must*—there is an abſolute neceſſity for it. There is no other way of eſcaping the damnation of hell. "You muſt turn, or burn." If you be not born again, better were it for you that you never were born—or that a millſtone were hung about your neck, and you were caſt into the ſea, never to ariſe.

Perhaps you may be ignorant enough to reply, "Surely, I was born again, when I was baptized." As this plea is ſo exceedingly frivolous, it ſcarce deſerves a ſerious anſwer: However, as it has been ſo frequently urged, eſpecially by thoſe of the church of England, I ſhall weigh it in the balance of the ſanctuary.

None, I believe, who have read the ſcriptures, will attempt to deny that we muſt *repent, and believe the goſpel,* before we can be entitled to the bleſſed privileges of it. Hence, part of the Catechiſm runs thus. "What is required of perſons to be baptized?" And the anſwer is, "Repentance, whereby they *forſake* ſin—and faith, whereby they ſtedfaſtly believe the promiſes of God made to them in that ſacrament." Now, have you *forſaken ſin?* And do you *believe that promiſe* of God, that he will *give his people the knowledge of ſalvation, by the remiſſion of their ſins?* If not, you have never performed the previous requiſites to baptiſm; conſequently, the ſprinkling of water has done you no manner of good, and you have need to come by faith to *the blood of ſprinkling,* which can alone waſh away your ſins. Again—it is aſked "What is the inward, and ſpiritual grace," which is ſuppoſed to accompany "the outward and viſible ſign, or form in baptiſm?" *Anſwer*—"A death unto ſin, and a new-birth unto righteouſneſs: For, being by nature born in

ſin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace." Are you then *dead unto ſin, and alive unto God?* Have you experienced "a new birth unto righteouſneſs?" If not, you are ſtill *in your blood, and in your ſins*—you have ſtill that nature in which you were born—you are ſtill a child of wrath, and muſt be born again by the baptiſm of *the Holy Ghoſt, and of fire*, before you are made "a child of grace?" What avails "the outward and viſible ſign" if you are deſtitute of "the inward and ſpiritual grace?" Will you reſt content with a *ſhadow*, while others are in poſſeſſion of the *ſubſtance?* By an external ceremony, you think you were "made a member of Chriſt, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Allowing for argument-ſake, that water-baptiſm did incorporate you into Chriſt's church, yet, was it not on certain conditions? Did you not "promiſe and vow three things? Firſt, that you would renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh—Secondly, that you would believe all the articles of the chriſtian faith—And, thirdly, that you would keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the ſame all the days of your life." Anſwer now, as in the ſight of God, Have you performed this ſolemn engagement? If conſcience be allowed to ſpeak, it will bear witneſs againſt you, that, inſtead of "renouncing the devil and all his works," you have been in league with him, and working iniquity from the time you were born—purſuing "the pomps and vanity of this wicked world," and gratifying "all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh." Neither can you "believe this article of your chriſtian faith" that "God the Holy Ghoſt

has

has ſanctified you," without believing a lie, for you are yet unholy: Nor can you ſay that you have "kept God's holy will and commandments," for you have broken them, times without number, both in thought, word, and deed, and perhaps with horrid aggravations. Now, ſuppoſing that God entered into any contract with you, at the time of your baptiſm, or confirmation, yet, as you have not fulfilled the conditions on which God promiſed his bleſſings—as you have receded from *your part* of the covenant, will not God juſtly look upon *his* part as diſannulled? If, therefore, you have no other aſſurance of your being in Chriſt Jeſus, than your initiation into a viſible congregation of people, by the rite of baptiſm, you yet remain what you were by nature, a member of the ſynagogue of ſatan, a child of the devil, and an inheritor of the kingdom of hell: And except an entire renovation of ſoul takes place in you before you die, you will be glad to have ſome of that water with which you were once ſprinkled, to cool your burning tongue.

The ſpirit of God dwelleth not in an unclean body—*his temple is holy*. If then you are abſurd enough to imagine that you were really "regenerate, and grafted into the body of Chriſt's church," when you were a helpleſs infant, incapable either of repenting or believing—if the Holy Ghoſt was given to you, when the miniſter "ſigned you with the ſign of the croſs," yet your manifold ſins have *grieved* him, and provoked him to withdraw. You have been "aſhamed to confeſs the faith of Chriſt crucified"—you have not "manfully fought under his banner againſt ſin, the world, and the devil"—you have not "continued

tinued Christ's faithful soldier and servant," therefore all the *signs* and *tokens* with which you were marked are of no significance. You bear *the mark of the beast in your forehead*, and Christ will be *ashamed to confess you before his Father and his holy angels.*

"Forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate, and born anew of water, and of the Holy Ghost," if infants admitted into the *church of England* are "regenerate, and born anew" by the ministration of baptism—it follows, that all children who die without that ordinance, must be eternally *damned*, and, at the same time, all baptized drunkards, whoremongers, and adulterers must be *saved*, contrary to the express word of God, which declares *they shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

In Christ Jesus (says St. Paul) *neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature?* Gal. 5. 6.—6. 15.——Are you one? If not, how dare you call yourself *a christian?* That *baptism which saves us* (says St. Peter) *is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.* 1 Pet. 3. 21.—It is not the dipping under water, or the sprinkling of our faces, that can constitute us christians, but a conformity to the divine will. Writing to the Galatians, Paul declares, that *as many of them as had been baptized into Christ, had put on Christ.* Gal. 3. 27.—When they embraced the doctrines and faith of Christ, they no longer *made provision for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts thereof; but they put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and his righteousness.* Again he says of the Colossians, *Ye are circumcised with*

with the circumciſion MADE WITHOUT HANDS, *in putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh, and are buried with Chriſt in baptiſm, wherein alſo ye are riſen with him, through that faith which is of the operation of God.* Col. 2. 12.—Circumciſion, or cutting off the fleſh of their foreſkin, was the outward ſeal of the covenant which God made with his choſen people the Jews: But, as it is written, *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumciſion which is outward in the fleſh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumciſion is that of the heart, in the ſpirit, and not in the letter, whoſe praiſe is not of men, but of God.* In like manner, he is not a *chriſtian*, who is only one by name and profeſſion, neither is *the baptiſm of John* of any ſignification, which waſhes the *body* alone, without purifying the *ſoul:* But he is a *true chriſtian*, whoſe inner man is renewed by the grace of God, and whoſe *heart* is *waſhed from wickedneſs*, by the baptiſm of Chriſt. It is not the dead letter, nor any external rite, that purges away the filth of Jeruſalem, but the ſpirit of truth working in the hearts of thoſe that believe. In the epiſtle to the Romans, we find theſe words, *Know ye not, that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him, by baptiſm, into death; that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, ſo we alſo ſhould walk in* NEWNESS OF LIFE. Rom. 6. 3, 4. As Chriſt was laid in the grave, and roſe again, ſo all who are his true diſciples, are buried, as it were, and become dead to all the things of time and ſenſe; and, by the quickning influence of the Holy Ghoſt, are made *alive unto God.* Converſion may be termed, a reſurrection from the grave of ſin.

As

As great a change is wrought in the *ſoul* of the *believer*, as paſſed upon the *body* of dead Lazarus, when Jeſus ſaid to him, *Come forth*. Every chriſtian, who is *planted in the likeneſs of Chriſt's death*, is freed from thoſe ſins to which he was before ſubject, and has no longer *fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs*, in which he once delighted; even as a dead man has no more communication with the things he was formerly converſant with, but is delivered from all the cares and troubles of this mortal life. And as *death has no more dominion over Chriſt*, ſo (ſays St. Paul) *ſin ſhall not have dominion over* the chriſtian. He is redeemed from its oppreſſive power, and has received ſuch a meaſure of grace as may enable him to *ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made him free*, and never to *be again entangled with the yoke of bondage*. Gal. 5. 1.

As many as walk according to this rule (of the *new creature*) *peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God*. Gal. 6. 16. But *upon every ſoul of man that doth evil be tribulation and anguiſh, indignation and wrath*. Rom. 2. 8. Therefore, let me repeat it once more, *You muſt be born again*. "A chriſtian (ſays John Weſley) is ſingularity all over—you muſt be ſingular or be damned." Sinner, look to your ſoul—take heed on what footing you ſtand. If you are doing like the reſt of your neighbours, as ſure as God is in heaven, ſo ſure both they and you are going in the broad road to hell. O man, ſtart back—leave the workers of iniquity, leſt you be confounded with them. Take the advice of a prophet, and an apoſtle. *Caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions, and make you a new heart, and a new ſpirit, for, why will you die?* Ezek. 18. 31.—*Be not conformed to this world,*

world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Rom. 12. 2. Thus shall it be well with you in life, in death, in all eternity, when you shall be received up into glory, and inherit the kingdom purchased for you by Jesus Christ your Saviour.

SERMON X.

ROMANS iii. 23, 24.

All have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God, being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt.

IF any other man had whereof he might truſt in the fleſh, St. Paul had more. As he himſelf informs us, he was *circumciſed the eighth day*, the very day which God had inſtituted, and was thereby admitted into covenant with God and his church. He was *of the ſtock of Iſrael*—an Iſraelite by birth, not proſelyted to the Jewiſh religion. He was *of the tribe of Benjamin*, who adhered to the worſhip of God, and the kings of the houſe of David, when the other tribes revolted to king Jeroboam, and forſook the temple of the Lord. As to his extraction, he was *an Hebrew of the Hebrews*—both his father and mother were native Iſraelites: And *as touching the righteouſneſs which is in the law*, he was *blameleſs*—he literally fulfilled the letter of it, and *lived after the ſtricteſt ſect of the Phariſees*, ſo that none could arraign his outward conduct. *Concerning zeal, he perſecuted the church of Chriſt even unto ſtrange cities, and unto death*, binding and delivering men and women into priſons. He verily thought within himſelf that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus of Nazareth; therefore, being exceedingly mad againſt the ſaints, he often puniſhed them in

in every ſynagogue, and compelled them to blaſpheme. He was, alſo, *taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the Fathers*, and was very tenacious of all their traditions. He profited in the Jews religion above many of his equals in his own nation; and as to erudition, he was *bred up at the feet of Gamaliel*, the moſt eminent doctor of the laws in his day.

But, when it pleaſed God to call him by his grace, and to reveal his ſon in him, that he might preach him among the heathen, he then *put no confidence in the fleſh, but rejoiced in Chriſt Jeſus*, his Lord. He no longer prided himſelf in his former privileges, the dignity of his birth and family, his ſtrict morality, or his poliſhed education; but he gloried only in *Chriſt, who of God was made unto him wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption.* 1 Cor. 1. 30. *What things were gain to me* (ſays he) *thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt: Yea, doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith.* Phil. 3. 7, &c.

What an amazing change did divine grace work in his ſoul! The proud philoſopher, the ſelf righteous Phariſee, the perſecuting bigot, became an humble, teachable child, a penſioner on the merits of Chriſt, and a preacher of the faith which he once deſtroyed. He willingly reſigned every thing, however pleaſing or advantageous, that he might have an experimental knowledge of Chriſt, *whom to know is life eternal*; and he

eſteemed all earthly honours, pleaſures, and profits, but as *the mire of the ſtreets*, when contraſted with the noble, pleaſurable ſervice of Chriſt. He diſclaimed all his Phariſaical works, and reſted all his hopes of ſalvation upon that *man of ſorrows, who laid down his life for us.* And therefore he cries out, *God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* Gal. 6. 14.

Being thus made a happy partaker of *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt*, he *determined to know nothing elſe*; and therefore continually *teſtified, both to the Jews and Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom all who believe are juſtified from all things from which they could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes.* Acts 13. 39.

But the ſame oppoſition which this doctrine then met with, has ſubſiſted to this very day; ſo that there is not, I ſuppoſe, in all the compaſs of controverſy, a point that is more vehemently decried by *the diſputers of this world*, than juſtification by faith alone, though it is moſt clearly inculcated in almoſt every page of holy writ. They *do err, becauſe they know not the ſcriptures, neither the power of God:* Nay, I am perſuaded, that numbers of the moſt violent gainſayers are ignorant even of the very term, juſtification; yet notwithſtanding this, *as natural brute beaſts, they will ſpeak evil of the things that they know not.* Having no idea of *the knowledge of ſalvation, by the remiſſion of our ſins*, in this preſent life, they conclude that juſtification means final acceptance at the tribunal of God, in the day of judgment: Whereas, it is an act of God's free grace, whereby he *now*

abſolves

abſolves and acquits penitent ſinners from the guilt of ſin, and the puniſhment due to it, by the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, apprehended by faith. It is a forenſick term, denoting the diſcharge and enlargement of a criminal, after trial. When, therefore, a ſinner is arraigned at the bar of God's juſtice, and is condemned by the law of God, as a tranſgreſſor, if he confeſſes his ſin, and throws himſelf entirely on the mercy of his Judge, pleading the act of indemnity, and beſeeching him (for the ſake of that Jeſus, who was *delivered for his offences, and raiſed again for his juſtification*) freely to pardon him, the Father of mercies not only forgives him, but adopts him as a ſon. *The ſpirit* of God is given unto him to *bear witneſs with his ſpirit that he is a child of God*. And being thus *juſtified by faith, there is no condemnation* to him, becauſe he is *in Chriſt Jeſus*; and, in conſequence of his vital union with Chriſt, he *walks not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit*. Rom. 8. 1, 16.

In this manner muſt all the ſons and daughters of *the firſt Adam*, be juſtified by *the laſt Adam*, who *was made a quickning ſpirit*, or they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. Now the reaſon is evident—*The ſoul that ſinneth*, ſays God, *ſhall die*; and *he that believeth not ſhall be damned*: Conſequently, the whole human race are expoſed to eternal death and damnation, becauſe *the ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin and unbelief. All have ſinned*, without exception—*there is no difference. All have fallen ſhort of the glory of God*—of that holineſs, which is the glorious image of God. *We have proved*, ſays the apoſtle, *that both Jews and Gentiles* (that is, all mankind) *are under ſin*—under the guilt, the burden, and dominion of it; and therefore are liable to the *wrath of God reveal-*

ed from heaven againſt all unrighteouſneſs and ungodlineſs of men. He then confirms his allegation, by quoting ſome ſelect paſſages from ſcripture, which delineate our total depravity. *It is written, there is none righteous* (by nature) *no, not one. There is none that underſtandeth—there is none that ſeeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way—they are all together become unprofitable—there is none that doth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open ſepulchre—with their tongues they have uſed deceit—the poiſon of aſps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs—their feet are ſwift to ſhed blood. Deſtruction and miſery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known—there is no fear of God before their eyes.* Rom. 3. 9, &c.

What a horrible, but juſt, deſcription is this of men, in their unregenerate ſtate! Now, as this is the character which God gives of us, it is utterly impoſſible that we can be accepted of him for any thing that we *have* done, or *can* do: Becauſe, 'till grace changes our nature, and refines our affections, inſtead of loving God, and walking according to his will, our minds are full of *enmity againſt God*, and his holy ways—they are *not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* Rom. 8. 7. *They that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God*—there is *iniquity* in their moſt *holy things.* Their very *prayers are an abomination* before God, who is *angry with the wicked every day.* Hence it is affirmed in the thirteenth article of the church of England, "Works done *before juſtification, before the grace of Chriſt, and the inſpiration of his ſpirit,* are not pleaſant to God, foraſmuch as they ſpring not of faith in Jeſus Chriſt; neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the ſchool-

authors

authors say) deserve grace of congroity: Yea, rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." Our very best performances, before we are justified by faith in the blood of Christ, instead of being meritorious in the sight of God, are but splendid sins. Tho' we are as *devout* as *Cornelius*—though we may *fear God* and *pray to him always*, and *give much alms to the people*, yet we are still *heathens*, until, like him, we *receive remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost*, Acts 10. 43.—"We are accounted righteous before God (as the eleventh article testifies) only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings: Wherefore, that we are justified by *faith only*, is a most wholsome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of justification."

Every creature under heaven, capable of sinning, forfeits his claim to eternal life by his disobedience: And, therefore, must be *justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*. According to this evangelical system, we can arrogate nothing to ourselves, but must come as humble suppliants to the throne of mercy, *heartily* crying, "Almighty, and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways, like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders, according to thy promises declared

unto mankind in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord." By this confeſſion, we plainly declare, that *all fleſh has corrupted his way upon the earth*, and muſt be *juſtified freely*, without the leaſt merit in us, *by the grace of God*, by the mere mercy, and condeſcending favour of God, through Jeſus Chriſt, who has *bought* us *with* the price of his own blood, and is therefore the only Redeemer and Saviour of the world. Thus is proud man abaſed, Chriſt exalted, and our ſalvation redounds *to the praiſe of the glory of God's grace, whereby, according to the good pleaſure of his will, he makes us accepted in the beloved.* Eph. 1. 5, 6.

What things ſo ever the law ſaith, it ſaith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be ſtopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Rom. 3. 19. If we think ourſelves under a covenant of works, we are become *debtors to do the whole law.* Gal. 5. 3. We are under an indiſpenſable obligation to fulfill it in every tittle. We cannot make the leaſt infringement upon it, without incurring the annexed penalty. *The law ſaith, Do this, and thou ſhalt live.* It requires a conſtant, perfect, unſinning obedience. If, therefore, we do not render unto God that complete obedience, we are obnoxious to the puniſhment denounced againſt every breach of the law. The leaſt failure cuts off all our hopes. One ſin as effectually excludes from ſalvation by the law, as ten thouſand. Now, all muſt acknowledge that they have broken it times without number, both in thought, word, and deed. Our ſins have multiplied beyond the hairs of our head, and have reached up to the very heavens. How abſurd is it, then, to expect juſtification by a law, which we have not kept? As well might a condemned murderer

derer plead in his behalf the act of parliament which prohibits murder, on pain of death. The very ſtatute which he brings for his defence is the one which convicts him. Thus the law of God, inſtead of accquitting us, proves us guilty. We are brought under the damnatory ſentence of it, and every vain-glorious mouth is ſhut up in ſilence. It *takes* us *by the throat, ſaying, pay me that thou oweſt.* Matt. 18. 28. But, alas! we have nothing. Its demands are many, and we are ſpiritually poor. We dare not ſay, *Have patience with me, O Lord, and I will pay thee all*; for our *goodneſs extendeth not unto him.* Pſal. 16. 2. No future obedience (allowing we were capable of it) can compenſate for paſt diſobedience; even as a debtor's paying ready money for goods this year, will not diſcharge the debts contracted laſt year. *As many*, therefore, *as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe; for it is written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in* ALL THINGS, *which are written in the book of the law to do them.* Gal. 3. 10.—Now, have you, proud Phariſee, *continued in all things?* From your youth up, have you obſerved every commandment of God? If not, you are *under the curſe* of a broken law, and the wrath of God is abiding upon you; for *the law* (ſays St. Paul) *worketh wrath.* Rom. 4. 15. It is again written by St. James (2. 10.) *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* If, then, you have ever committed a ſingle treſpaſs againſt the divine law, you have thereby ſhewed your contempt of the legiſlator, and have rendered yourſelf obnoxious to the puniſhment denounced by that particular law which you have broken, though you might have ſtrictly adhered to the ſacred code, in every

other

other instance. All the commandments of God are equally binding; consequently, the violation of *one* of them brings death upon you. Thus it is even under human administration. Murder, forgery, and robbery are all considered as capital crimes, and if we are found guilty of any one of these, the laws of our land declare we shall die. How ineffectual, then, would it be for a robber, to say at the bar, or the gibbet, "I never committed murder, therefore I ought not to suffer this ignominious death." The magistrate might justly reply, "Though you have not slain a man, yet you have stolen your neighbour's property, which is expressly forbidden by the law, therefore you must suffer as a lawless malefactor.

In this convincing manner St. James argues, *He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.* Nay, says he, *if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.* James 2. 9, 11. If any particular deference be paid to the rich, more than the poor, in the church of Christ, we transgress against the law which saith, *Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor the person of the mighty.* Our law-giver hath again said, *Swear not at all, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation.* James 5. 12. If, therefore, we have ever sworn, by our souls, our faith, or our conscience, we have trampled the law under foot, and God has assured us, he *will not hold us guiltless.*

It is true that all sins are not equally attended with such evil consequences; but they are all equally

qually violations of the law of God: *Therefore*, ſays St. Paul, *by the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight; for* (adds he) *by the law is the knowledge of ſin.* Rom. 3. 20.——As the light manifeſts darkneſs, ſo the law brings us to the knowledge of ourſelves, convincing us that we are poor, helpleſs, undone creatures, inſufficient, as of ourſelves, to ſpeak a good word, or think a good thought. As a ſun-beam diſcovers the motes which were not before diſcernable, ſo the law, ſhining in upon the benighted ſoul, diſcloſes our alienation from God, and proves the heart to be *a cage of unclean birds*, and the habitation of every foul ſpirit. It is the microſcope through which we ſee thoſe crawling luſts with which we were ſwarming, though we knew it not. Hence, David ſays, *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the ſoul—the teſtimony of the Lord is ſure, making wiſe the ſimple—the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the eyes.* Pſal. 19. 7, 8. St. Paul experienced the truth of this, when he tells us, *I had not known ſin, but by the law—I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.* Rom. 7. 7. When *the candle of the Lord* ſhone bright upon him, he then viewed the law of God in a different light from that in which it appeared to him before. He then diſcerned that it was of ſuch a ſpiritual nature as to reach to the very *motions of ſin* ariſing in his heart, condemning a luſtful thought, cheriſhed and indulged, as much as the open act of adultery. When he was *a child of wrath even as others who know not God*, he imagined that as *touching the righteouſneſs of the law, he was blameleſs.* Becauſe he kept up to the bare letter of it, he hoped to be thereby juſtified: And though he was

in a ſtate of ſpiritual death—though he perſecuted and deſtroyed the church of Chriſt, yet the father of lies perſuaded him to believe that he was in the way to eternal life, and that he was actually *doing God ſervice*. *I was alive* (ſays he) *without the law once*. While I lived after the ſtricteſt ſect of the Phariſees, I flattered myſelf that I was high in the favour of God. But, alas! my ignorance of the law was the ſole occaſion of my forming ſo prepoſterous a judgment: For, *when the commandment came*, in all its power, extent, and ſpirituality to my heart, *ſin revived, and I died*. I then clearly perceived that I was *carnal, and ſold under ſin*, and I received the ſentence of death in myſelf. I was immediately convinced that in my fleſh dwelt no good thing—that I was *wretched, and abominable, and unto every good work reprobate*. My moſt devout actions appeared ſins to me; and, as the due wages of ſin, I ſaw nothing before me, but *a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation*. Thus, concludes he, *the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death*. Rom. 7. 9, &c.——

It is plain, then, for what purpoſe the law was inſtituted, namely, to convince us of ſin—It *entered that the offence might abound*—that we might ſee how exceeding ſinful we are, both by nature and practice, and might be thereby induced to ſeek for a more perfect righteouſneſs, even *the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt unto all, and upon all them that believe*. Rom. 3. 22. *Wherefore the law is our ſchool-maſter to bring us unto Chriſt, that we may be juſtified by faith*. Gal. 3. 24.——

The intent both of the ceremonial and the moral law was to point us for ſalvation unto Chriſt Jeſus.

Jesus. The former consisted of various sacrifices, and purgations, which, as they were all symbolical of the Lamb of God, are now abolished, by the *offering up of his body once for all upon the tree*, whereby he has made "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

Christ, also, *is the end of the* moral *law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* As a covenant of works, it was utterly incapable either of justifying our persons, or purifying our souls. *The law made nothing perfect*—not that it was defective in itself; for *the commandment was holy, just, and good.* But, as all men, through original corruption, were rendered so helpless that they could not fulfil *the holy commandment delivered to them*, therefore *what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God* has effectually accomplished; by *sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh*, who surrendring himself up as a sacrifice *for sin, condemned sin in our flesh*—passed sentence against it, *that it should no longer reign in our mortal bodies. God made him who knew no sin*, who was *holy, harmless, and undefiled, to be sin for us* (i. e. a sin-offering) *that we*, who were unholy, and enemies in our mind by wicked works, *might be made the righteousness of God in him.* 2 Cor. 5. 21. As all our iniquities were laid upon, and imputed unto Christ, so his righteousness is imputed unto them that believe.

We are not now, therefore, *under the law, but under grace*—under a more favourable dispensation, which tenders salvation upon the easiest terms, and which promises sufficient strength to subdue the corruptions of the old Adam. *The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life*; so that each believer

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can ſay with Paul, *The law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus hath made me free from the law of ſin and death.* Rom. 8. 2. The covenant of grace, ſealed by the blood of Chriſt, communicates ſpiritual life to the ſoul, delivering it from the bondage and tyranny of ſin, and from all the curſes conſequent upon it: For *Chriſt has redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.* Gal. 3. 13.—By his obedience unto death, believing ſinners are reconciled, and may *with boldneſs enter into the holieſt by his blood, by a new and living way which he hath conſecrated for us thro' the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh.* Heb. 10. 20.

How ſhould man, otherwiſe, *be juſt with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot anſwer him one of a thouſand.* Job 9. 2. Therefore, all have need to pray with David, *Enter not into judgment with thy ſervants, O Lord, for in thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified.* Pſal. 143. 2. *If there had been a law given* (ſays St. Paul) *which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law*—Gal. 3. 21—God would never have appointed another method of juſtification, nor ſent the Son of his love into the world, to lay down his life for us. But it was impoſſible that the law could give life; for through the depravity of human nature, none can preſume to plead a ſinleſs obſervance of the commandments of God: And, therefore, *he hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all*—(Rom. 11. 32.) that the honour of our ſalvation might be wholly aſcribed unto him, who will not give his glory to another. *By grace are ye ſaved* (declares the apoſtle) *through faith, and that not of yourſelves, it is the gift of God, not of works leſt any man ſhould boaſt.* Eph. 2. 8. It is of the free bounty, and undeſerved goodneſs

goodneſs of God, that any are brought into a ſtate of ſalvation, and it is through faith that we *receive the atonement*. Neither are we to conſider even faith as our work, but as a grace wrought in us by God himſelf. He is the *Author* and the *finiſher* of our faith. All the comforts we now enjoy, all the graces we poſſeſs, all the proſpects we have of a bleſſed immortality, are derived from him. They are not the effects of our works, *leſt any man ſhould boaſt*—ſhould be puffed up with a vain opinion of himſelf, and forget that it is in God he *lives, and moves, and has* both *his* ſpiritual and animal *being*. Salvation, therefore, *is of grace, that no fleſh might glory in his preſence, but that he who glorieth, might glory in the Lord*, out of whoſe fulneſs he receives. Or *him* (ſays St. Paul) *and* THROUGH *him, and* TO *him are all things, to whom be glory for ever*——*Amen*. Rom. 11. 36. God being the ſource of all our bleſſedneſs, our Creator, our Preſerver, our Saviour, the whole world muſt look to him, live to him, give praiſe to him; for *he hath made all things for himſelf*. It is *for his pleaſure* that *they are and were created*; therefore, they ſhould anſwer the end of their creation, and fulfil his pleaſure. And as it is he *that worketh in his ſaints both to will and to do*, if we did all things that are commanded us, we only render back unto God his own: For, *what have we, that we have not received? Now if we have received it, why ſhould we glory as if we had not received it?* 1 Cor. 4. 7.——*Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.*

But *to him that worketh*—that dependeth on his works for ſalvation—*is the reward reckoned, not of grace, but of debt*. Rom. 4. 4.—If we could attain eternal life, by any power or merit in ourſelves,

we would thus make God our debtor, and have nothing to thank him for, but might confidently claim the kingdom of heaven as our due, our wages which it would be unjuſt in God to refuſe. But, what ſaith the ſcripture? The reward *is of faith, that it might be by grace* (Rom. 4. 16.) that all might acknowledge it was the Lord's doing, and ſay, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praiſe.* Surely, *it is of the Lord's mercy that* every ſoul under heaven is *not conſumed.* We have ſo often provoked his divine Majeſty, that had he rewarded us according to our iniquities, he might juſtly have ſent us quick to hell. If, therefore, any of us are crowned with glory, grace, free grace, unmerited grace, muſt ſtill be the burden of our ſongs—this will be the grand chorus of all the heirs of ſalvation. *Where is boaſting then?* aſks the apoſtle. *It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay—but by the law of faith.* If it were poſſible that we could enter into heaven by any other way than *Chriſt, the door*, we *might have whereof to glory:* But, according to the plan of ſalvation by faith, all human confidence is cut off—all ſelf-glorying is quite excluded. As *faith is the gift of God*, the receiver cannot boaſt—all glory muſt be referred to the giver—and every believer muſt ſay with Paul, *by the grace of God, I am what I am.*

Iſrael, which followed after the law of righteouſneſs, did not attain unto it. And wherefore? Becauſe (anſwers the apoſtle) *they ſought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they ſtumbled at that ſtumbling-ſtone.* Rom. 9. 31, 32.—They imagined that as God had once entered into covenant with them, and choſen them to be his peculiar people, he would never caſt them

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off. But when the promiſed Meſſiah *came unto his own, and his own received him not*, the Lord rejected them, and *called* the believing Gentiles *his people, which were not his people, and her beloved, which was not beloved.* The Jews (like too many in this generation) prided themſelves upon their ritual obſervances; and thinking that their obedience to the law of Moſes would juſtify them before God, they ſtumbled at the threſhold of Chriſtianity, at the doctrine of faith in a crucified Redeemer. Therefore, though they earneſtly ſought acceptance with God, they found it not, becauſe they did not ſeek it in the way which God had ordained, namely, *through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt, whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, declaring his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus.* Rom. 3. 25, 26.———

Well may we ſay that the Lord *is wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working*, when we conſider in what manner he has reconciled loſt ſinners to himſelf. By diſobedience man had incurred the diſpleaſure of God—his life became forfeited to divine juſtice—he could by no means redeem himſelf, nor give a ranſom for his ſoul. The ſecond Perſon of the ever-bleſſed Trinity then undertook to fulfil the law, as our repreſentative, and to endure the ſeverity of his Father's wrath. *When we were without ſtrength*, in a helpleſs condition, *Chriſt died for the ungodly—the juſt died for the unjuſt—the holy One of Iſrael* for the unholy ſons of men. God was pleaſed to accept this vicarious ſatisfaction; and thus mercy and juſtice *met together, and kiſſed each other.* Therefore, *to him that worketh not*—(as the ſcriptures teſtify) that has no

righteousneſs of his own, *but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs.* Rom. 4. 5.—The active and paſſive obedience of Chriſt is made over to him, and he is no longer a *child of wrath*, but a *veſſel of mercy*. Faith is *the bunch of hyſſop* that ſprinkles the blood of the Lamb, and *cleanſes* the ſinner *from all unrighteouſneſs*.

The very *law* itſelf, as well as the *goſpel*, plainly declares that *there is no other Saviour beſide Chriſt*. *The righteouſneſs of God* (ſays the apoſtle) *without the law*—without any previous obedience, *is manifeſted; being witneſſed by the law and the prophets.* Rom. 3. 21.——God, ſpeaking by them, ſays, *I looked, and there was none to help; therefore mine own arm brought ſalvation to me.* Iſa. 63. 4.—*I have laid help upon one that is mighty, who ſhall let go my captives, not for price or reward*—not for any merit in them, for they are under the captivity of ſin, but for his own mercies ſake. Pſal. 89. 19.—Iſa. 45. 13. *I will bring near my righteouſneſs, it ſhall not be far off, and my ſalvation ſhall not tarry: I will raiſe unto David a righteous branch, and in his days Judah ſhall be ſaved, and Iſrael ſhall dwell ſafely, for, this is his name whereby he ſhall be called,* THE LORD (Jehovah) OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Iſa. 46. 13.—Jer. 23. 5, 6.—*Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth; for I am a juſt God, and a Saviour, and there is none elſe. In the Lord ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified, and ſhall glory. Surely ſhall one ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* Iſa. 45. 21.——

Oh that all the world could ſay this! Oh that every ſoul of man could adopt the language of St. Paul,

Paul, *I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt, for therein is the righteouſneſs of God revealed.* Rom. i. 17.

Brethren, my heart's deſire and prayer to God for you, is, that you may be ſaved. Many of you, like the Jews of old, may *have a zeal for God, but* it is *not according to knowledge*, if *going about to eſtabliſh your own righteouſneſs, ye do not ſubmit yourſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God.* Rom. 10. 2, 3. How forcibly does the Apoſtle argue with you! *If righteouſneſs come by the law, then Chriſt is dead in vain*—(Gal. 2. 21.) he came into the world upon a needleſs errand, and ſhed his blood to no manner of purpoſe. *If you keep the law* in every tittle, *verily* your obedience *ſhall profit you: But if you are a breaker of the law* in any one inſtance, muſt you not rather look for puniſhment, than for a reward? *As many as have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law.* Bring, then, your life *to the law, and to the teſtimony.* Have you *ſinned?* Have you *fallen ſhort of the glory of God?* If ſo, inſtead of ſerving God, you have diſobeyed him; and inſtead of meriting any thing from him, you can expect nothing, either upon rational, or ſcriptural principles, but vengeance. *Behold*, ſays St. Paul, *thou reſteſt in the law, and makeſt thy boaſt of God, and knoweſt his will; and approveſt the things that are excellent, being inſtructed out of the law. Thou, therefore, that makeſt thy boaſt of the law, through breaking the law, diſhonoureſt thou God?* Rom. 2. 17, &c. The holy Lord *hates robbery for burnt-offering*: And yet it is this which you are daily preſenting unto God, while you rob Chriſt of his mediatorial honour, and take away the names of *Saviour*, and *Redeemer* from him. 'Tis in vain for you to

ask, *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?* Micah 6. 6. Alas! millions of hecatombs can never attone for the smallest offence. You must be stripped of every plea but this, "Christ Jesus died." As a bankrupt you must come to God, who frankly forgives the debts of every self-condemned, humbled sinner, for the sake of that Surety, who undertook to discharge them, and said unto his Father, as Paul unto Philemon concerning Onesimus, *If he hath wronged thee or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account.* You must be *justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*, which signifies, an anointed Saviour. God hath *anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, and in him alone he is *well-pleased*. Therefore, importunately call upon God that he may give you faith to *lay hold upon the* only *hope set before you.* Cease not praying, until you can say with Philip, *I have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth.*

They that are of faith, the same are the children of faithful Abraham. Gal. 3. 7. *He believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* Believe you, also, and you shall be *blessed with him.* God invites you to come to him in the condition you now are, however polluted, and offers you *the waters of life freely.* Oh, hear his pathetic call. *Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money—come ye, buy and eat—yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.* Isa. 55. 1. What! Can you have all "the plenitude of gospel-grace" for the asking, and will

will not you accept it as a gift? God requires no righteouſneſs of yours in exchange. "All the fitneſs he requireth, is to feel your want of him." Are you then ſenſible that you ſtand in need of being waſhed in his blood, and cloathed in his righteouſneſs? Behold! He is near *that juſtifieth the ungodly.* Chriſt will come, with all his ſanctifying graces, and take up his abode with you: *The Spirit ſhall be poured upon you from on high, then ſhall the work of righteouſneſs be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs, and aſſurance for ever.* Iſa. 32. 17.

SER-

SERMON XI.

ROMANS iii. 31.

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we eſtabliſh the law.

AT the time when ſome diſputes ſubſiſted between the members of the church at Corinth, concerning the ſeveral miniſters who had preached the goſpel among them, St. Paul wrote to them thus—*I beſeech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no diviſions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.* 1 Cor. i. 10. Now, this wholeſome advice has been followed by the ſpiritually-minded in all ages of chriſtianity. Though I allow they have often differed in points of doctrine which are non-eſſential, yet they have perfectly harmonized in the capital points of the chriſtian religion, ſuch as regeneration, juſtification by faith alone without the deeds of the law, and ſanctification proceeding from faith. Theſe articles have been earneſtly maintained by all the enlightned authors of every ſect, who have wrote ſince the days of Chriſt and his apoſtles.

But there have not been wanting emiſſaries from ſatan to withſtand them: And indeed it is wonderful to think how exactly they agree in *their* creed. What they have often ſaid to the ſervants of Chriſt, when eſtabliſhing any ſcriptural truth,

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or reproving them for their sins, may be justly retorted on themselves, "Ye have all got the same cant upon your tongues." As the children of God *have an unction from the holy-one*, whereby they *know all things* necessary to salvation; so the devil, who was a liar from the beginning, furnishes his children with objections against the truth, and thus prepares them for damnation. If we examine all their arguments for above seventeen hundred years back, we shall find they have been still the same with those made use of at this very day: And the *heathen that know not God* are as unanimous in exploding and vilifying the doctrines necessary to be believed and practised, as *christians* are in maintaining them; so that when the insufficiency of the law to justify us in the sight of a pure and holy God is insisted on, how common is it to hear numbers exclaim, "Horrid doctrine! What! would you set aside good works?" The very same objection was raised by the *pharisaical* Jews, against the great apostle of the *believing* Gentiles, who so strenuously endeavoured, in all his epistles, to humble the pride of sinful man, and to exalt the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, by declaring that he was the only *propitiation for our sins*, and that, through faith in him, we could alone have access into the grace of God.

But shall it be hence inferred that he made Christ the minister of sin, or that he gave the least latitude for licentiousness? No—he had not so learned Christ. Throughout all his writings, he shewed a mind truly set upon promoting holiness, and discountenancing every species of wickedness. How positive is his charge to Titus, whom he had made an overseer of the church at Crete! *In all things* (says he) *shew thyself a pattern of good works*, and

and *put* others alſo in *mind to be ready to every good work.* For *this is a faithful ſaying, and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which have believed in God, may be careful to maintain good works: Theſe things are good and profitable unto men.* Tit. 2. 7.—3. 1, 8.—It is clear, then, that though he was the greateſt enemy to the doctrine of merit in man, yet he was a moſt zealous advocate for every branch of godlineſs; and none could enforce practical duties in a ſtronger manner than he has done.

As he effectually guarded the *goſpel*, by depreciating works ſo far as to deny them the office of juſtifying, ſo he ſecured the *law*, by his frequent exhortations to *holineſs, without which*, he has aſſured us, *no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* Thus, all the diſciples of Moſes, and all believers, who, through the force of temptation, *turn the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs*, are equally put to ſilence.

Many of the ſelf-righteous, no doubt, had accuſed St. Paul of making the commandments of God of none effect, by ſo firmly maintaining that *not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his mercy doth God ſave us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.* Tit. 3. 5.—Therefore, that he might remove every ſtumbling-block out of the way of gainſayers, and give no occaſion to the enemies of the Lord to blaſpheme, or to ſpeak reproachfully of the cauſe of Chriſt, he aſks, *Do we, then, make void the law through faith?* And, with ſeeming deteſtation of ſuch a thought, he anſwers, *God forbid! Yea we eſtabliſh the law.*

The law which the apoſtle here ſpeaks of muſt be, undoubtedly, the moral law, though ſome have ignorantly ſuppoſed he meant the ceremonial law.

law. But, ſo far was he from eſtabliſhing this, as neceſſary to be now adhered to, that he laboured throughout many of his epiſtles, to withdraw the Jews from all their ritual obſervances, from the types and ſhadows, which only prefigured Jeſus Chriſt. Now that the ſubſtance has appeared, the ſhadows have all vaniſhed away—the type is ſwallowed up in the antitype, and *the handwriting of ordinances that was againſt us is nailed to his croſs.* Hence he thus addreſſes the Galatians, ſome of whom had been ſeduced from the faith of Chriſt, and the ſimplicity of the goſpel, and had been brought back by Judaizing teachers to *the beggarly elements of the world. O fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you ſhould not obey the truth? This only would I learn of you. Received ye the Spirit, by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye ſo fooliſh? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the fleſh.* Gal. 3. 1, &c. Then, ſtriving by a variety of arguments to prove that no man is juſtified by the law, and that *the juſt ſhall live by faith,* he exhorts them in theſe ſtriking words. *Stand faſt, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul ſay unto you that if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing. Chriſt is become of no effect unto you—whoſoever of you are juſtified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.* Gal. 5. 1, &c. In his epiſtle alſo to the Hebrews, he magnifies the prieſthood of Chriſt, by ſhewing the inſufficiency of the Levitical diſpenſation to take away our ſins, and that it was only deſigned to typify the great *high-prieſt of our profeſſion. The law* (ſays he) *was not* even *an image,* or exact repreſentation, but only *a ſhadow of good things to come.*

come. It bore but a faint reſemblance to the bleſſings of the goſpel which was to be revealed; and it *could never with thoſe ſacrifices which* the prieſts *offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect: For, then, would they not have ceaſed to be offered? Becauſe that the worſhippers once purged, ſhould have had no more conſcience of ſins. But in thoſe ſacrifices there is a remembrance again made of ſins every year.* Could the annual legal ſacrifices have pacified God, or the upbraiding conſciences of ſinners, it would have been unneceſſary to offer them up more than once: For, if thoſe who needed ſuch expiation, had been cleanſed from their ſins, they would have been no longer conſcious of the indignation of God reſting upon them, on account of their ſins. But, as they were, through the infirmity of their fleſh, repeatedly tranſgreſſing, yearly ſacrifices were abſolutely requiſite. Now theſe, conſidered independently of Chriſt, had no virtue or efficacy in themſelves: *For it is not poſſible* (adds the apoſtle) *that the blood of bulls and of goats, ſhould take away ſins.* Therefore, the deſign of them was to direct ſinners to the Lamb of God ſlain from the foundation of the world; who, on account of the hypoſtatical union of the human and divine nature, was the only ſacrifice that could poſſibly *make reconciliation for iniquity.* As our Surety, in the form of a *man*, he voluntarily obeyed the law which we had violated, and bore the vengeance due to our ſins, by hanging on a tree: And being *God over all*, his oblation was of infinite value. Whereas, a beaſt, which could not willingly ſubmit to become a victim, and which had neither the nature of man nor of God, could not fulfil the law for us, nor bear our ſins ſo as to become an adequate

adequate ſatisfaction. Wherefore David, ſpeaking to us in the perſon of Chriſt, prophetically declared, *In burnt-offerings, and ſacrifices for ſin, thou haſt had no pleaſure, but a body haſt thou prepared me: Then ſaid I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.* Thus the God-man, Chriſt Jeſus, has *taken away the firſt covenant*—diſannulled the Levitical prieſthood, and has *eſtabliſhed* his own perpetual prieſthood, the ſecond covenant of grace, according to the promiſe of God—*This is the covenant that I will make with them after thoſe days, I will put my law into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more.* Hence it follows, that *where remiſſion of theſe is, there is no more offering for ſin.* The ſacrifices and purifications under the law are now entirely abrogated, and ſo effectual is the atonement of Chriſt, that it need not be again repeated. *After he had offered one ſacrifice for ſin, he ſat down for ever on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting 'till his enemies be made his foot-ſtool.* Heb. 10. 1, &c.

It remains then, without controverſy, that the law which is eſtabliſhed through faith is the moral law. Let us now conſider in how many ſenſes it may be ſaid to be eſtabliſhed.

Firſt, then, the deſign of it is eſtabliſhed. It was intended to convince us of ſin, *that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe. The law entered* (ſays St. Paul) *that the offence might abound*—that we might ſee how exceeding ſinful we are. As a bright mirror will reflect every ſtain which defiles the objects that are placed before it, ſo the glaſs of the law diſcovers all the pollutions of the ſoul that looks into it. It is the ſtraight rule by which we are to re-

gulate our moral conduct; and if we do not keep close to it, if we turn aside into *crooked ways*, it immediately points out our *disorderly walk*, and we are thereby convinced that we have missed our road to heaven—have deviated from the *narrow path that leads to everlasting life*. As a running-horse that goes off the course will lose the prize, so we must forfeit all pretensions to the heavenly crown, if we *once* go out of *the high-way* of holiness, and run not our christian race according to that direct line laid down for us. If we keep not the commandment undefiled, we can never live thereby; consequently, are forced to seek out another method whereby we may be justified in the sight of an immaculate God. When we swear, commit adultery, or even *look on a woman to lust after her*, the holy law of God condemns us which expressly forbids such crimes, denouncing a dreadful penalty against those who are guilty of them. *They that commit such things are worthy of death*; and the sentence against them is registered in the court of heaven. How then can the condemned criminals escape? Why, Christ is exhibited as *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*. Rom. 10. 4.—He has fully satisfied all its clamorous demands, and has appeased vindictive justice; for *it pleased the Lord to bruise him*, and to *lay upon him the iniquities of us all*. Thus the broken law leads us for salvation to Christ, who is *the Repairer of the breach*. Like *the avenger of blood*, it drives us into *the city of refuge*. Joshua 20. 3.—Christ is *a refuge for the oppressed, in the day of trouble*. *The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness-sake; he has magnified the law, and made it honourable*. Isa. 42. 21.——

But,

But, as St. Paul asks, *Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?* Surely, every true believer will answer with him, *God forbid!* Far be the thought from those who have *tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious.* Such *are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.*

Secondly, then, we establish the law, by acknowledging it to be the rule whereby we are to frame our lives. *The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light.* Though we are not under it as a covenant of works, by which we can expect acceptance with God, yet we must consider it as a directory and a guide, to lead us in the way wherein we ought to go. For *we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully*, if he does not abuse the intent of it, by setting it up as his saviour. Nay, believers (above all the rest of the world) are under a more indispensable obligation to fear God, and work righteousness, on account of that light and knowledge which has been imparted to them. As they know more than others, God may justly ask them, *What do ye more than others?* Mat. 5. 47.—While God has given to mankind in general only one talent, to his saints he has communicated five or ten talents, and will, accordingly, require a proportionable improvement of them. They must return him his own with usury. If they do not use what they have received to his glory, their gifts and graces will be taken from them, and conferred on other servants, that have been more diligent in laying out their master's stock to advantage. The kingdom of grace shall be taken from them, *and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* Hence our Saviour says, *That servant which knew his Lord's*

will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes: For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him will they aſk the more. Luke 12. 47, 48.—St. Peter, alſo, ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe. *If any, after they have eſcaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worſe with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them, not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.* 2 Pet. 2. 19, 20.

By theſe awful threatnings all the ſervants of Chriſt, all *believers*, are warned to keep their *loins girded about, and their lights burning*. For if *they begin to eat and drink with the drunken*—to mix with and be conformed to the world, their Lord *will come in a day when they look not for him, and at an hour when they are not aware, and will cut them in ſunder, and appoint them their portion with the* UNBELIEVERS. Luke 12. 45, 46. How ought this conſideration ſtir them up to watchfulneſs and prayer; and convince them that nothing ſhort of outward and inward holineſs can give them the leaſt title to the kingdom of heaven! Thoſe miſerably deceive themſelves who imagine they are *the elect of God*, while, by their wicked works, they manifeſt themſelves the *children of the devil*. To deliver us from ſuch a fatal deluſion, how wiſely calculated is the twelfth article of the eſtabliſhed church. "Albeit that good works, "which are the fruits of faith, and follow after "juſtification, cannot put away our ſins, and endure the ſeverity of God's judgment, yet are

"they

"they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, "and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively "faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may "be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by "the fruit." This leads me to shew that

Thirdly, we establish the law, by fixing it on its true foundation.

It is an allowed maxim that there must be a cause for every effect. Now, the grace of God is the efficient cause of all the good that appears in any of his creatures. Our hearts are as dead to the things of God, by nature, as ever Adam was to the things of this world, before the Lord animated his body. As, then, he breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, whereby he became a living soul; so must he breathe upon the inner man by his Spirit, and quicken us to divine life, before we can *walk after the Spirit*. As great darkness rests upon our souls as there was upon the face of the earth before the spirit of God moved upon it, and said, "*Let there be light*." When the same Spirit moves upon us, then *the darkness passeth away, and the true light shineth*. 1 John 2. 8.——As a tree cannot possibly bear fruit, except it has a root, and is planted in the ground, neither can we produce the fruits of the spirit, until the spirit of God be in us, as the root from whence they must spring: And, on this account, the saints are called *trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord*. Isa. 61. 3.——

In every piece of mechanism, there is a certain spring which sets all the wheels in motion—they must stand still, if this spring does not actuate them. Thus the spirit of the Lord is the *primum mobile*, the moving principle in the hearts of believers, which excites them to every good word

and work, and makes them run, ſwift as the chariots of Aminadab, in the way of God's commandments. But if this ſpirit ceaſes to operate, we cannot take one ſtep towards the kingdom of heaven: All our actions will be lifeleſs, and unacceptable to the Lord. As a dead body is without ſenſe, perception, and motion, and cannot perform the functions of a living man, no more can the ſoul which is deſtitute of the ſpirit of grace do any thing that will be well-pleaſing to that God, who is *the God of the living, and not of the dead.* All *our ſufficiency*, then, *is of him*; and *every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.* The diverſities of gifts, adminiſtrations, and operations which are given to the ſeveral individuals in the churches of Chriſt, to profit withal, proceed from *the ſelf-ſame ſpirit, which worketh all in all, dividing to every man ſeverally as he will.* 1 Cor. 12. 6, &c. All righteouſneſs and true holineſs is communicated from God, through Jeſus Chriſt, *without whom we can do nothing.* If he does not *work in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*, we ſhall be only as cumberers of the ground, ready to be cut down, and caſt into the burning. But if we are branches in *the living Vine*, and *abide* in him by faith, the heavenly huſbandman will daily purge us, that we may bring forth more fruit. John 15. 1, &c.

When Chriſt exhorted ſome of the Galileans not to labour for the meat which periſheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlaſting life, they ſaid unto him, *What ſhall we do that we may work the works of God?* And he anſwered them, ſaying, *This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent.* John 6. 28. To the ſame purpoſe

purpose speaks St. John. *This is the commandment of God that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.* 1 John 3. 23.—Faith is *the one thing needful without which it is impossible to please God.* Heb. 11. 6. Though we may be *careful about many* other *things*, and *cumbered with much serving*, yet all our works, if they proceed not from *a pure heart and faith unfeigned*, from a principle of love to God and man, are inavailable to our salvation. Faith is the work which renders us the objects of divine favour, and qualifys us for admission into the kingdoms of grace and of glory. By faith alone it is that we are justified, and sanctified, and so made meet to be glorified. It is not an inactive grace, but rather includes all good works in it: It is the fountain-head from whence they take their rise. And, therefore, says Christ, *He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water* (meaning *the spirit which all they that believe on him should receive*). John 7. 38.—Now, says the apostle, *where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* (2 Cor. 3. 17.) a deliverance not only from the guilt of sin, but also from the power of it.

"What is redemption in Christ's blood
"But liberty within?
"A liberty to serve my God,
"And to eschew my sin.

"Faith, when it comes, breaks ev'ry chain,
"And makes us truly free;
"But Christ hath died for thee in vain,
"Unless he lives in thee."

What

What is *the victory that overcometh the world?* *Even our faith*, says St. John. It is the foundation of all piety. Wherever faith is, it must be operative. If we really believe, that Christ is *the Author of eternal salvation only to them that obey him*, will not such a faith necessarily excite us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, lest, after having a promise left us of entering into God's rest, we should at last fall short of it? As none are pronounced *blessed*, but those who *do his commandments*, and as he only that hath *clean hands and a pure heart, shall stand upon God's holy hill*, will not a firm persuasion of the truth of this make every believer diligent that he may be *found of God in peace without spot or blemish?* Will he not be fruitful in every good work, and *walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing*.

If a man love me (says Christ) *he will keep my words*; and to confirm this, St. Paul declares, *the love of Christ constraineth us*—it will, by an almost irresistable impulse, force us to abound in the works of the Lord. How senseless and ungrateful would that man be, who would run counter to the commands of a generous benefactor who studied nothing but his interest! What child would willingly displease a tender and indulgent father? *We love God*, says St. John, *because he first loved us*. When he has infused into our souls a sensibility of our pardon, and reconciliation with him, wrapped up in wonder, we cry out, *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God*. 1 John 3. 1.—Now it is *by faith*, as St. Paul bears witness, that we are made *the children of God*: Gal. 3. 26. And at the time of our justification, or adoption into *the household of faith, the love of God*

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is ſhed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghoſt given unto us. (Rom. 5, 5.) conſequently, we will endeavour to pleaſe him whom we love, *holding the myſtery of faith in a pure conſcience.* Then thoſe minds which were full of enmity againſt God and man, are filled with warm affection to both. Then all fretfulneſs, impatience, wrath, reſentment, and implacability ſubſide, while patience, gentleneſs, forbearance, and all the other chriſtian graces ſhine conſpicuous in our lives. Then that *charity*, which *ſuffereth long, and is kind*, which *is not eaſily provoked*, which *beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things*, manifeſts itſelf in all our dealings with men. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour* (ſays St. Paul) *therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.* Rom. 13, 10.—And again, *All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.* Gal. 5. 14.—And *upon theſe two commandments, the love of God, and the love of our neighbour* (as Chriſt avers) *hang all the law and the prophets.* Mat. 22. 70.—Thus it appears, that love, which comes by faith, is the ſource of pure religion, and all good works originate from it: For, if we *love God with all our heart, with all our ſoul, and with all our ſtrength, and our neighbour as ourſelves*, we will do nothing that can grieve or offend, either the one or the other.

Let us, now, illuſtrate theſe obſervations by examples.

When our Lord ſaid unto *Matthew*, whom he found ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom, *Follow me*, he was not *diſobedient to the heavenly calling*; but, believing that he who ſpoke to him was the Chriſt of God, the Saviour of the world, *he left all* without the leaſt heſitation, and *roſe up and followed him.*

him. Then making a great feaſt for him, he invited other publicans and ſinners, that they might have an opportunity of hearing the words of eternal life from him, who came *to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt.*

Thus Zaccheus, alſo, who had grown rich by extortion and robbery, and was the chief among the tax-gatherers, the head of the moſt deſpiſed people among the Jews, when he was convinced of ſin, and brought to believe on the Lord Jeſus, he directly made confeſſion of his unrighteous deeds: And, reſolving to *renounce the hidden things of diſhoneſty*, and to make reſtitution to thoſe whom he had defrauded, ſtood up before the multitude, and ſaid, unto Chriſt, *Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken any thing from any man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore him fourfold.* Luke 19. 8.

In like manner, when Saul, at the very time that he was breathing out threatning and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of the Lord, heard the voice of the Son of God from heaven, trembling and aſtoniſhed, he cried out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* His faith immediately ſet him upon doing ſomething for Chriſt and his cauſe, though, but a few moments before, he was perſecuting Chriſt in his members, and was going to Damaſcus in order to bring the chriſtians that were there bound unto Jeruſalem, to be puniſhed. When ſtruck by the Almighty power of God, he not only deſiſted from his purpoſe, but teſtified his zeal for Chriſt, by enquiring what work or ſervice he was capable of rendring unto him.

The Lord being then pleaſed to make him a preacher of *that faith which he once deſtroyed*, he became an uſeful inſtrument in bringing others to

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the knowledge of the truth, and to an experience of the ſame divine change which had paſſed upon him. God wrought ſuch ſpecial miracles by the hands of Paul, and enabled him to ſpeak in ſuch a powerful and convincing manner, that *fear fell upon the people, and many that* BELIEVED *came* voluntarily, *and confeſſed and ſhewed their* wicked *deeds. Many of them, alſo, which uſed curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men. And they counted the price of them, and found it to be fifty thouſand pieces of ſilver.* Acts 19. 18, &c. Thus we ſee the effects of faith—it inſtantly produced good works. It not only made them confeſs, but forſake their ſins: And though they might have diſpoſed of their pernicious books for a conſiderable ſum of money, yet by burning them, they gave a manifeſt proof of their contempt of riches, and of love to their fellow-creatures, who might have been corrupted by the reading of thoſe books, had they purchaſed them.

St. Paul informs us that it was *through faith*, all the ancient worthies *wrought righteouſneſs.* Heb. 11. 33.—And, ſurely, if we are *the children of* faithful *Abraham* (as Chriſt tells us) *we will do the works of Abraham.* John 8. 39.———

But many are at a loſs how to reconcile St. Paul and St. James, who ſeem to differ with regard to the inſtrumental cauſe of a ſinner's juſtification.

If we conſider the different perſons to whom theſe two apoſtles directed their epiſtles, we ſhall then find that they are perfectly correſpondent with each other. St. Paul addreſſed himſelf to the Jews, who were a ſelf-righteous nation that looked for acceptance with God, through their obedience to the law of Moſes, and thereby deſtroyed the faith

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of Chriſt: For, *if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promiſe unto Abraham and to his ſeed, through the righteouſneſs of faith is made of none effect.* Rom. 4. 13, 14.—— But St. James wrote to thoſe who took upon them the profeſſion of chriſtianity (as numbers do at this day) and yet did not adorn the doctrine of Chriſt, by a holy life and converſation. They pretended to have faith in him, and were called by his name, but yet lived in all the vices of the heathen, which was a clear demonſtration that their faith was not genuine. The whole ſcope of his reaſoning is to aſcertain the properties of faith, and to ſhew that the mind which was in Chriſt will be in all them who are juſtified by faith in his blood. Therefore, he ſays, *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man* SAY *he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith ſave him?* James 2. 14.—Can a notional, ſpeculative faith, which has no influence on the practice, be of the leaſt ſignificance? Will a belief of the articles of chriſtianity, without an adherence to the commandments of God, ſave us? No verily—A man may *ſay* he has faith, but if he ſhews not in all his actions the concomitant fruits of righteouſneſs, he deceiveth himſelf. There is a material difference between *ſaying* we have faith, and *really having* it; for, *the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.* 1 Cor. 4. 20.—If we were actually in poſſeſſion of it, we would be in a ſtate of ſalvation; for Chriſt hath ſaid, *He that believeth on me, ſhall never die*—and ſays an apoſtle, *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.* It is plain, then, that when St. James aſks, *Can faith ſave a man?* He only ſpeaks of a bare aſſent to the revelation of God. This will appear clearer ſtill,

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if we purſue the thread of his diſcourſe. *Thou believeſt* (ſays he) *that there is one God, and thou doſt well.* So far you are right, but you are not thereby juſtified, or in a ſalvable ſtate; for, adds he, *the devils alſo believe and tremble.* Their faith extends as far as yours—you are juſt upon the ſame level with them, while you lead not a godly life; and have as much reaſon to tremble as they have. *Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith, without works is dead?* It is a counterfeit, ſpurious faith; and 'tis as abſurd in you to ſuppoſe that you are a believer in Chriſt, when you do not tread in his ſteps, as it would be in a man to ſay he was charitable, when he did no acts of charity. *If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily food, and one ſay unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithſtanding he gives them not thoſe things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even ſo faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone:* And again, *as the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo.* Good works are as neceſſary to prove a living faith in Chriſt, as the breath is to prove a living man. If the breath which animates our earthly tabernacle be once withdrawn, what are we but lifeleſs carcaſes, a nuiſance upon the earth? In like manner, if the Spirit of the Lord does not move our hearts to ſerve him, if we have not that quickning faith which enables us to do the will of God, though we may *have a name to live*, we are as dead to ſpiritual things, as a breathleſs corpſe is to things temporal. Every tree is known by its fruits, whether it be good or bad: Therefore Abraham ſhewed his faith by his works. *Was not Abraham our father juſtified by works, when he had offered Iſaac his ſon upon the altar?* By this ſignal

instance of his obedience, did he not give an indubitable indication of his faith? Though Isaac was his son, his only son, whom he loved, and the seed in whom God had said *all the nations of the earth should be blessed*, yet he was so *strong in faith* that God would fulfil his word in some way unknown to him, that he never hesitated to offer up his beloved child as a sacrifice to the Lord. *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?* When God *tempted* him, that is, put his faith to the proof, he gave the strongest evidence of his stability, and of his confidence in the divine promise. Thus *was the scripture fulfilled, which saith, Abraham* BELIEVED *God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God.* Likewise also did not *Rahab the harlot, when she received the messengers, and sent them out another way*, plainly shew that she *believed* in the God of Jacob, and that the Israelites were his servants unto whom he would deliver the city in which she lived? Her kind behaviour to the spies was entirely the result of her faith: For if she had not been thoroughly persuaded that they were the people of the living God, she would never have hazarded her life, by receiving them into her house. *You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*—that it is not religious opinions, nor an avowal of the christian creed which can possibly justify us, but such a faith as is productive of obedience to God. Now, so far are St. James and St. Paul from contradicting one another, that they mutually confirm and support each other's arguments. They both endeavour to make *the faith of the gospel* honourable, but they do it in a different manner. St. Paul proves

that

that God will not accept us, or justify our persons upon any other ground than faith; and St. James shews what a great grace it is, by insisting, that it will always be manifested by the fruits of good living. And herein St. Paul agrees with him, declaring that the faith which *justifieth the ungodly*, is an active faith prompting us to do those things which God hath commanded—It *worketh by love*, says he—it *purifieth the heart*—*it overcometh the world*. We are therefore to consider St. James's epistle only as a farther illustration of, or paraphrase on St. Paul's writings, that no one might mistake his meaning, as if the faith which he recommended so strongly was only a belief of the christian religion. St. James guards us against this misprision, by averring that if our persons are justified by faith in the Son of God, our faith will be justified, or evidenced before men, by good works. The works that believers do will bear witness of their faith. In short (to use the language of a modern writer) "Both St. Paul and St. "James sweetly harmonize together. One is "speaking of Abraham's acceptance through *be-* "*lief* of the promise, the other of a farther and "future acceptance through *obedience*. St. Paul "saith *Abraham was justified by faith* (Rom. 4. "3.) St. James saith, *Was not Abraham justified* "*by works?* James 2. 21. But there is no con- "tradiction—they neither speak of the same justi- "fication, nor the same faith, nor the same "works. It is *living* faith which St. Paul saith "justifies—it is *dead* faith which St. James con- "demns, and saith, *What can it profit?* St. Paul "speaks of that justification which Abraham re- "ceived many years before Isaac was born (Gen. "15. 6.) St. James of that which he received,

" when he had offered Iſaac up. James 2. 21.—
" St. Paul ſpeaks of works done *before* juſtification
" (Rom. 4. 2, &c. Gal. 2. 16.—3. 10.) St.
" James of works wrought *after* it, through faith
" (James 2. 22, 25.) Abraham was juſtified in St.
" Paul's ſenſe, that is, accounted righteous, by
" *faith*, antecedent to his works. He was juſti-
" fied in St. James's ſenſe, that is accepted
" through his works, conſequent upon his faith:
" (Mat. 12. 37.) Or, as the apoſtle explains him-
" ſelf, *By works his faith was made perfect.* God
" confirmed, increaſed, and perfected the prin-
" ciple from which thoſe works ſprung. So that
" St. James's juſtification by works, is the *fruit*
" of St. Paul's juſtification by faith; and both
" perfectly conſiſtent with each other."

It is a certain truth that by our works we ſhall be *juſtified*, or *condemned*, at the laſt great day. Mat. 12. 37.—*Behold* (ſays Chriſt) *I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work ſhall be.* Rev. 22. 12.—*Bleſſed* then, *are the dead which die in the Lord: Even ſo, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them.* Rev. 14. 13.—When all nations ſhall be gathered before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, then will he ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats. *Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink—I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in—naked, and ye cloathed me—I was ſick, and ye viſited me—I was in priſon, and ye came unto me. For inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of my brethren,*

brethren, ye have done it unto me. Mat. 25. 34. &c. But how different will be the ſentence pronounced againſt the wicked, becauſe they abounded not in theſe works: *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

In vain, then, do we profeſs the chriſtian faith, or juſtification in the blood of the Lamb, if we are not *working out our ſalvation with fear and trembling:* For, *God hath not called us unto uncleanneſs, but unto holineſs.* Titus 3. 8.—If our *faith be but as a grain of muſtard-ſeed,* it will be evidenced by a conformity to the righteous will and word of God. We will ever ſet the Lord, and his holy law before our eyes, and by works make our faith perfect. Therefore, "what God hath joined together, let no man put aſunder."

Believing chriſtians, walk worthy of your holy vocation—Be fervent in ſpirit—Serve the Lord in humility and reverence—*I have choſen you,* ſays Chriſt, *that ye ſhould bring forth fruit.* John 15. 16. See, therefore that ye be fruitful and multiply in all the works of the Lord. For, *bleſſed,* (ſays he) *are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.* Rev. 22. 14. Work, then, as if you expected eternal life by the deeds of the law, and ſtill *count yourſelves unprofitable ſervants,* relying only on the blood and righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, your Saviour and Redeemer, to whom be glory, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

SERMON XII.

2 PETER i. 5, 6, 7.

Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness, charity.

THIS epistle is directed to *them that had obtained like precious faith with* the Author of it, *through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ; whereby were given unto them exceeding great and precious promises, that by these they might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

Hence it appears that when we are enabled by faith to lay hold upon the promised blessings of the gospel, our natures will be spiritualized; and, walking in the Spirit, we will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; but will then consider ourselves as *God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.*

As it is a *strait gate* through which we are to pass into life eternal, our Lord has informed us, that *many shall* SEEK *to enter in, and shall not be able:* Therefore, adds he, STRIVE *ye to enter in, for the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* It will require the utmost exertion of all our powers, and our whole strength must

muſt be exerciſed in working out our ſalvation. As *men of God*, we muſt *reſiſt, even unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin.*

Numbers vainly imagine, when they have once experienced *redemption in the blood of Chriſt, the forgiveneſs of their ſins*, that all danger is paſt, and they can never periſh eternally. But if this were ſo, how unneceſſary are all the cautions which are given us not to *draw back unto perdition!* Why are we required to *look diligently leſt any of us fail of the grace*, or glory *of God? Wo unto them*, ſays Amos, *that are at eaſe in Zion.* God's people muſt be active in their holy calling, that they may *ſtand perfect and compleat in all the will of God.* Inſtead of hiding their light, by putting it under a buſhel, they muſt let it ſhine before men. For *God is a rewarder of them* only *that diligently ſeek him.* For want of due circumſpection and perſeverance in prayer, ſome, *after eſcaping the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour*, may be *again entangled, and overcome.* 2 Pet. 2. 20.—Deſpiſing little things, they fall by little, 'till it *happens unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again —and, The ſow that was waſhed to her wallowing in the mire.*

Knowing, then, that even of thoſe that are *called*, but *few are choſen*, all who are *the firſt* now, in their chriſtian courſe, ſhould take heed that they be not *the laſt.* It is in vain to think of feeding upon "the corrupted manna of paſt experience;" for as the body requires conſtant ſuſtenance, ſo does the ſoul. We muſt get freſh ſupplies of grace from the exuberant fountain of all good, and daily draw water out of the wells of ſalvation. If we ever expect to attain unto *the*

full

full measure of the stature of Jesus, we must *grow in grace*, and *go on unto perfection*. A *babe in Christ* will never become a *young man*, nor a young man a *Father in Christ*, unless he is daily nourished with *the sincere milk of the word*. If we are negligent in asking for greater degrees of grace, or in husbanding what we have already received, instead of growing up as *the tall cedars of Lebanon*, we shall be as *trees twice dead*, fit only to be *plucked up by the roots*. *I went by the field of the slothful*, says Solomon, *and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding: And lo! it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone-wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well—I looked upon it, and received instruction.* Prov. 24. 30, &c. He was taught this important lesson, that if we be not *good stewards of the manifold grace of God*, and do not faithfully improve what he has entrusted us with, though we have been like *a defenced city*, yet shall we become *a ruinous heap*. God may *appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks*, yet they may all fall to the ground, through our inattention and carelessness. God may *plant us a noble vine, wholly a right seed*, and yet, for want of proper cultivation, we may *turn into the degenerate plant of a strange vine*. Jer. 2. 21. Those souls which have once *blossomed as the rose*, which have been like *Eden, the garden of the Lord*, may again become *a wilderness*, and the cares of this world springing up, may effectually choke the good seed sown in our hearts.

Let us therefore, (as the apostle advises) LABOUR *to enter into that rest which remains for the people of God*. Heaven is not to be gained by a few yawning desires, impotent wishes, or lifeless prayers.

prayers. *The ſoul of the ſluggard deſireth, and hath nothing, but the ſoul of the diligent ſhall be made fat.* Prov. 13. 4. We may lift up our eyes, and formally cry, *Lord, help me*, but if we do not *ſtir up the gift of God that is in us*, and call forth our own powers into action, we ſhall find God's ears deaf to our lukewarm complaints. *The way of the ſlothful man is as an hedge of thorns*—every ſtep he takes in his ſpiritual progreſs, he is afraid of being hurt; and he ſays, *there is a lion without, and I ſhall be ſlain in the ſtreet.* He foreſees dangers which have no other exiſtence but in his own imagination; and thus giving place to the devices of ſatan, he grows remiſs in his duty—ſeldom bows the knee in ſecret—forſakes the aſſembly of the ſaints—and at laſt is ſo *weary and faint in his mind*, that he gives up all hopes, and is again *led captive by the devil at his will.*

Go to the ant, thou ſluggard—conſider her ways and be wiſe—which, having no guide, overſeer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the ſummer, and gathereth her food in the harveſt. Prov. 6. 6.—What! ſhall a ſenſeleſs inſect upbraid you? Shall not a child of God, who has not only reaſon, but revelation, and the ſpirit of God, to be his counſellors, look into futurity, and wiſely lay up in ſtore for himſelf a good foundation againſt the time to come? Behold! this is the time of harveſt—your life is the ſummer, wherein you muſt provide for eternity. *Work*, then, *while it is called to day*, like a faithful labourer, and you ſhall eat the fruits of your toil. How forcibly does the apoſtle, in the text, exhort you? *Giving* ALL *diligence*, ſays he, *add to your faith virtue*, that is, *valour.*

When I happen to look into the writings of ſome of our *divines* (as they are called) and find the

the word *Virtue* so frequently occurring in every page, I immediately set them down as *heathens* who never heard of, or at least never embraced *christianity*: For I can scarcely discern any difference between the instructions of Epictetus or Seneca, and those given us by the modern preachers of morality. The terms *Virtue and Vice*, are so often made use of by both, that they pall upon the reader's sense. What then can we think but that our *Reverend Doctors* are better acquainted with *heathen* authors, than they are with the *word of God*? For, *there* we find no mention of the word *Vice*; and though the translators of the bible have introduced the word *Virtue* four times, yet it bears a different signification from what is commonly annexed to it. In the text, it is plain it cannot be understood as a generical term, including in it *all* virtues; for then it would have been absurd in the apostle, to say, *Add to your virtue, knowledge, temperance*, &c: For whoever has *virtue*, according to the sense in which it is at present used, would have all the moral branches contained under it. It is clear, then, that St. Peter's meaning is, *Add to your faith, valour*. And, indeed, it is a most requisite grace, as those who are enlisted under Christ's banner have many enemies to encounter; and therefore, without valour, would never be able to accomplish what faith prompts them to.

Against all the elect of God there are three powerful princes combined—the world, the flesh, and the devil. *Principalities, and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places* must be wrestled with. But why should those fear who have the Lord Jehovah

Jehovah for their strength—the Lord Jesus for *the Captain of their salvation?* If he leads the way, they may undauntedly go forth, and be assured that they shall *come off more than conquerors.* Is not He greater who is for them, than all those that are against them? Put on then the whole armour of God, and endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. As Jahaziel said to king Jehoshaphat, so say I unto you, *Be not afraid, nor dismayed, by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not your's but God's. Go out, against them, for the Lord will be with you.* 2 Chron. 20. 15. Let this be your watch-word. *Through God will we do valiantly; for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.* Psal. 60. 12.

Are ye christians? Then prepare your souls for temptation—Ye may expect to meet with many crosses, both outward and inward, in your way to the kingdom. But what son is he whom the Father does not thus exercise? Your faith must be tried as Abraham's was, that *it may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* 1 Pet. 1. 7. Therefore, recede not from the trials you must meet with; for they are only designed to purify you. As Christ *learned obedience by the things which he suffered,* so must ye. Many are the *fiery darts* which *the accuser of the brethren* will shoot at you: But *the shield of faith* will blunt their edge, and turn them all aside, so that they shall not pierce you. Be strong, then, and of a good courage—Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. If he offers you all the kingdoms of the earth, say with Christ, *Get thee behind me Satan.* Remember that your great *forerunner* was *tempted in all points, like as ye are;* and therefore, *is able to succour them who are tempted.*

tempted. The God of this world can go no farther than the God of Jacob permits him: And when he *comes in upon you like a flood*, to overwhelm your desponding soul, *the spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.* What a precious promise is this! *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* Isa. 43. 2.—The God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will walk with you through the furnace, and not a hair of your head shall be singed. As long as you look to the Lord, he will be your support, and spread the everlasting arms beneath you; He has said, *As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.* Cast, then, all your care upon him who careth for you.

Take special heed, however, that ye do not dally with, or give way to temptation. Many are *drawn aside, and enticed of their own lusts:* Therefore, ye must also fight against *self*, sinful *self*—and indeed this is your most formidable enemy. *If any man will be my disciple*, says Christ, *let him deny* HIMSELF. If you would be christians indeed, *self* must be denied, and destroyed. All *selfish* designs, affections, pursuits must be given up. St. Paul complains, that *all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's.* Phil. 2. 21. Oh stedfastly withstand the solicitations of flesh and blood—It is a powerful advocate, and will often plead for a little self-indulgence. It will constantly be crying out, *Do thyself no harm.* But regard not such carnal reasoning: For, *they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.* Let not, then, a corrupt heart get the ascendency over you. *As many as are led by the*

spirit

ſpirit of God, they, and they only, *are the ſons of God.* Romans 8. 14. Therefore, through the ſpirit, mortify the deeds of the body, that ye may live a life of grace here, and of glory hereafter.

But ſatan, and a deceitful heart, are not the only foes you have to combat with. There are *wars without*, as well as *fightings within*. *The children of diſobedience* are the profeſſed ſworn enemies to *the ſaints that are upon the earth*. Therefore, ſays St. Peter, *think it not ſtrange, my beloved, concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though ſome ſtrange thing happened unto you. Becauſe ye run not into the ſame exceſs of riot with them*, they will *ſpeak evil, all manner of evil of you*. Think not, then, of reſt and eaſe on earth. *In the world*, ſays your divine Maſter, *ye ſhall have tribulation*: And, ſays an afflicted follower of his, *All that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer perſecution*. They met with it before you, and *through much tribulation entered into the kingdom*. Therefore, though the proud may have you greatly in deriſion, yet decline not from the law of your God. *If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but becauſe I have choſen you out of the world* (ſays Chriſt) *the world hateth you*: And he warns you not to *marvel at this*. *Ye know*, adds he, *that it hated me, before it hated you*: *And the ſervant is not above his Lord*. Follow, then, your deſpiſed Leader, *through evil report and diſhonour*; and, after, being *made perfect through ſufferings*, like him, with him ye ſhall *enter into his glory*. Gladly bear your croſs after the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth, *rejoicing that ye are counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name-ſake*. What gracious encouragement has he given you in theſe words, *Be ye faithful unto death, and I will give*

you a crown of life! Let not the Lord complain of you, as Jeremiah did of the people in his days, *There is none valiant for the truth upon the earth.* Be determined *earneſtly* to *contend for the faith once delivered to the ſaints*, and to ſpeak of the teſtimonies of the Lord, even before kings.

But there is *a zeal which is not according to knowledge*, or prudence: Therefore, ſays the apoſtle, *add to your valour, knowledge.*

Profeſſors are in great danger of running into extremes. Some young converts are too apt to betray an unbecoming warmth in defending their cauſe, and do not conſider places, perſons, circumſtances or time. Like Saul, they ſeem to breathe out threatning and ſlaughter againſt all thoſe that will not ſubſcribe to their opinions. When made *light in the Lord*, they forget they were *once darkneſs*, and therefore have no patience with thoſe who cannot ſee ſpiritual things, in the ſame clear point of view that they do. On the other hand, many who look upon themſelves as veterans in the camp of Chriſt let their armour lie by 'till it ruſts; and too often relax in their duty. They leave their *firſt love*, and their *firſt works*, and become languid, cold, dead, and faint-hearted. Yet, as if they had grown wiſe by experience, under the ſpecious pretence of acting cautiouſly, they adviſe others "not to go too far," for *the race is not always to the ſwift*. But ſuch counſel proceeds from a diſlike to the croſs, which we are by no means to decline, when *God* calls us to take it up. That prudence is from beneath, and comes from the enemy of ſouls, which tends to damp our godly affections, to quench the flame of zeal, and make us leſs careful to *maintain good works*. If *the zeal of God's houſe does not eat us up*,

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we will ſink into lifeleſs formality. But, let all take care that their zeal be well-grounded, and that it ſprings from an earneſt deſire to eſtabliſh the kingdom of Chriſt in the world.

The people of God are as *a city ſet upon an hill which cannot be hid.* The eyes of all men are upon them, and many are watching for their halting. It is, therefore, ſound advice which St. Paul gives them, ſaying, *Walk in wiſdom to them that are without, and cut off occaſion from them that ſeek occaſion.* The ſame direction Chriſt gave to his apoſtles, when he ſent them out as ſheep in the midſt of wolves, *Be ye wiſe as ſerpents, but harmleſs as doves.* And when God foretold the redemption of the church through Chriſt, he ſaid, *Behold, my Servant ſhall deal prudently.* Iſa. 53. 13. —Doubtleſs, we ſhould *be zealouſly affected in every good thing*, and we ought conſtantly to bear in mind what the Head of the church ſaid to Laodicea, *Becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth.* Rev. 3. 16.——Yet *wiſdom is profitable to direct, and is better than ſtrength, better than weapons of war.* Though *the righteous are as bold as a lion*, yet from that gentleneſs which is their leading characteriſtic, they are ſtyled *Lambs*: And it is their duty, *as far as in them lieth, to live peaceably with all men.*

Courage, tempered by diſcretion, is an invaluable bleſſing, and will effectually preſerve us unhurt, amidſt all the dangerous viciſſitudes of this mortal life: But if we are impetuouſly hurried on by blind zeal, our *courage* then degenerates into *temerity*, and while we *think we are doing God ſervice*, we are only injuring his cauſe, *and giving occaſion to our adverſaries to ſpeak reproachfully.*

Wiſdom ſtrengtheth the wiſe, more than ten mighty men which are in the city: And *through wiſdom*, ſays Solomon, *is a houſe builded, and by underſtanding it is eſtabliſhed, and by knowledge ſhall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleaſant riches.* Prov. 24. 3.——Would ye, then, build up the temple of the Lord, and be filled with all the treaſures of his grace? Look well to your goings —undertake nothing raſhly—let every thing you do be warranted by the word of God; and *keep your lips as with a bridle, while the ungodly is in your ſight.* God, 'tis true, has called you to fight; but not *with bitter envying, and ſtrife in your hearts. For this wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh.* James 3. 15.—*Who*, then, *is a wiſe man, and endued with knowledge among you? Let him ſhew out of a good converſation, his works, with meekneſs of wiſdom.* Too many betray the very cauſe which they mean to defend, by unguarded expreſſions, and uncharitable cenſures. If ever ye return *railing for railing*, it is an evident proof that ye are influenced more by a fondneſs for your own opinions, than by zeal for the glory of God. *Only by pride cometh contention, but with the well-adviſed is wiſdom:* And, *by wiſe counſel*, ſays Solomon again, *thou ſhalt make thy war.* The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but ſpiritual: When, therefore, ye are *aſked a reaſon of the hope that is in you, give it with meekneſs and fear.* In all religious controverſy, endeavour to preſerve a calm ſteady temper, unruffled by paſſion: And let your antagoniſt ſee, by your affable carriage, that you argue from a principle of love to God, and him. If you find he is irritated, remember that *a ſoft anſwer turneth away wrath.* By ſhewing all meekneſs,

meekneſs, forbearance, and long-ſuffering, you may gain *your brother, for whom Chriſt died. Let your moderation*, ſays St. Paul, *be known unto all men*: And in the text it is written, *add to your knowledge, temperance.*

This chriſtian grace has a reference to the ſoul, as well as the body; for both muſt be equally denied. In vain would it be to waſte the body to a ſkeleton by a rigorous faſting, if the ſoul be not purified—if we indulge any evil thought: For this is *the faſt that God has choſen, to looſe the bands of wickedneſs.* All unholy tempers, and inordinate deſires, muſt be purged away, and *every thought be brought into captivity to the obedience of Chriſt.*

But as the ſoul has ſuch an intimate connexion with the body, as the immortal ſpirit is fulfilled by the corruptible fleſh in which it dwells, temperance in our meat and drink is abſolutely requiſite. Therefore, ſays St. Paul, *I keep under my body* (or, according to the literal tranſlation, I beat it black and blue) *and bring it into ſubjection, leſt that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.* 1 Cor. 9. 27.——

God has, undoubtedly, *created meats to be received with thankſgiving of them who believe, and know the truth; for every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refuſed, if it be received with thankſgiving, and ſanctified by the word of God and prayer.* 1 Tim. 4. 3.——But, at the ſame time, great reſtraint muſt be put upon our unruly appetites. *Every man that ſtriveth for the maſtery is temperate in all things.* He will ſit looſe to all the creatures, and enjoy them with an holy indifference—He *uſes this world, as not abuſing it, and ſo paſſes through things temporal, as finally not to loſe the things eternal.* He "ears to live, not lives to

to eat." He ſtrengthens his body by food, that he may be the better enabled to glorify God with it: And, agreeable to the direction of the apoſtle, *Whether he eats, or drinks, or whatſoever he does, he does all to the glory of God.* 1 Cor. 10. 31.—— Do not, then, my brethren, like Eſau, *ſell your birth-right for a morſel of meat.* Be not found amongſt *wine-bibbers, and riotous eaters of fleſh:* But let as many as are *of the day, be ſober and vigilant.* Let them *walk honeſtly, as in the day, not in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of wine, revellings, and banquettings, even as the Gentiles which know not God.* Oh take heed to yourſelves, leſt, at any time, your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and ſo the great day of the Lord come upon you unawares. Deny, and crucify your fleſh—Let not your beaſtial part prevail and tyrannize over your rational faculties. *Put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite; and be not deſirous of dainties, for they are deceitful meat.* Prov. 23. 2.—Conſider that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt—therefore, defile it not by *the luſt of concupiſcence.* Learn to *poſſeſs your veſſel in ſanctification and honour, that you may be preſented as a chaſte virgin unto Chriſt,* to whom you are *eſpouſed.* Theſe reſtraints may be irkſome, at leaſt for a while: And, therefore, St. Peter exhorts you, to *add to temperance, patience.*

So *many are the afflictions of the righteous,* that it requires uncommon fortitude to bear them with humility and reſignation. But if the good word of God has been ſown in our hearts, and harrowed therein by frequent meditation, we will *bring forth fruit with patience.*

Chriſtians, be aſſured, that *affliction cometh not forth from the duſt*—it is appointed by an all-wiſe God

God who corrects every ſon that he receives. If therefore he has laid you upon the bed of languiſhing, repine not at the chaſtiſement of the Lord. Your *adverſary may provoke you ſore, to make you fret*; and the wicked, with bitter taunts, may aſk you, *Where is now your God?* They may bid you *curſe God, and die.* But they are only the meſſengers of ſatan permitted to buffet you, *that the trying of your faith may work patience.* Ye have ſeen the end of the Lord, in the caſe of Job, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy: Therefore, though he has given you the bread of adverſity to eat, and the water of affliction to drink, yet *in patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls*: And ye will have reaſon to ſay with David, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy ſtatutes,* Pſal. 119. 71.——

Are ye become as *the filth and off-ſcouring of all things*, in the eſtimation of the world? Do men caſt out your name as evil? Why—*hereunto were ye called; becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye ſhould follow his ſteps.* 1 Pet. 2. 21.—And *this is thank-worthy, if a man, for conſcience toward God, endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully:* Take, my brethren, the prophets who have ſpoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of ſuffering affliction, and of patience: And conſider Chriſt that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be wearied, and faint in your minds. Heb. 12. 3.—Oh, *let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect, and entire, wanting nothing.* James 1. 4.——

But, perhaps, ye are grievouſly tried by *falſe brethren*, and are ſaying with the royal pſalmiſt, *It was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it; but it was thou, a man, mine*

equal,

equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance: We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company. Psal. 55. 12.—The wound of such a friend cuts deep indeed: But was not Christ betrayed by one of his chosen apostles, and yet he brought not a railing accusation against the infamous traitor? Take heed, therefore, that ye give not place unto wrath. *The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle towards all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.* When Christ was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatned not, but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously. Thus commit your cause unto the Lord, and wait contentedly all the days of your appointed time, 'till your change come. The welcome hand of death will soon put an end to all your trials, and translate you into that kingdom, where the wicked shall cease from troubling, and all sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Indeed, as the apostle says, *Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.* Heb. 10. 36.—Looking, then, unto the great recompence of reward, *fret not yourselves because of evil-doers*, but *add to* your *patience, godliness.*

Always set the Lord before your eyes; and the constant consideration of his presence with you, will prove a sufficient check to all murmuring and discontent. *Great peace have they that love* his *law, and nothing shall offend them.* As he is about your bed, and about your path, and spieth out all your ways, live as those who *walk with God*, and who *see him that is invisible.* As he encampeth round about the righteous, and giveth his angels

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charge concerning them, to keep them in all their ways, let the belief of his peculiar providence over you ſuſtain you under all the tribulations that occur in this vale of tears. Perſuaded that *all things ſhall work together for good to them that love God*, look upon the moſt afflictive diſpenſations as "bleſſings in diſguiſe:" And *what ye know not now, ye ſhall know hereafter*—and will acknowledge the wiſdom of God in appointing you the bitter cup. Let a reverential awe of the divine Majeſty, and a filial fear of offending him be ever impreſſed upon your ſouls: And as *godlineſs is profitable for all things, having the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*, have reſpect unto all the commandments of God, the leaſt not excepted. Be univerſally conſcientious: And knowing that *love is the fulfilling of the law, above all things, love the brotherhood. Add to your godlineſs, brotherly-kindneſs.*

By this (ſays Chriſt) *ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another.* This is the diſtinguiſhing badge of Chriſtians. St. John, alſo, makes it the criterion whereby we may judge of our ſpiritual eſtate. *We know*, ſays he, *that we are paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death.* 1 John 3. 14.—Then, exhorting us to the practice of this duty, he ſays, *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love:* (1 John 4. 7, 8.) His nature and his name is love. It is *love* that *edifieth*—Therefore, covet it more earneſtly than the beſt gifts; for it is *the moſt excellent way.* With much prayer, read the deſcription which St. Paul gives of it in the 13th chapter

chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, and labour to come up to that divine standard. Follow after charity. Be kindly affectionate one to another—live, and love as brethren—as members of one body—as children of the same father—as servants of the same Lord, engaged in the same work—as co-heirs of the same eternal kingdom. It is recorded of St. John, that when he grew so old and infirm as to be incapable of speaking much, he had himself brought in an arm chair to the assembly of the saints, to whom he would say, every now and then, *Little children, love one another.* See then, that ye love not only in *word*, but in *deed*. Evidence your affection by your actions—by hospitality, and liberality. Let your love, also, be *without dissimulation*—let it proceed *from a pure heart, and a good conscience. Charity*, or love (says St. Peter) *shall cover a multitude of sins.* Though the trespasses of your brother have multiplied to seventy times seven, yet true love will incline you to forgive, and to throw the mantle of oblivion over all the injuries and insults that ye meet with. *Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering—forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* By such a carriage as this, ye will force the heathen world to say, "See how these *christians* love."

But there is still a further duty incumbent upon you. If ye would resemble Christ, it is requisite that ye should love not only your brethren in the Lord by redemption, but also your neighbours—your brethren by creation; for *God hath made of*

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one blood, all nations of men. Add, then, to brotherly kindness, charity.

Christ came to refine the law. No longer, therefore, must ye demand *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.* He has taught you another lesson. *I say unto you, resist not evil. Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.* Matt. 5. 39—*Love your enemies—bless them who curse you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you.* As the children of your heavenly Father who maketh his sun to rise equally on the evil, and on the good, be ye kind unto the *unjust*, as well as the *just*. For, as our Lord very forcibly argues, *If ye love them who love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans*, the most abandoned sinners, *the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?* Surely, *christians* must act upon different principles from *heathens. See*, therefore, *that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, not only among* YOURSELVES, *but with* ALL *men*—seek peace, and pursue it; for *blessed are the peace makers, they shall be called the children of God.* Mat. 5. 9.—Though the wicked may make themselves ready to battle, be ye men of peace. Be gentle, be courteous, be affable, shewing all meekness to all men; that ye may be enabled to say with the apostles of old, *Being reviled, we bless—being persecuted, we suffer it—being defamed, we entreat.* Nay, so exalted is the charity which the gospel enjoins, that if your enemy hunger, ye must give him bread—if he thirst, ye must give him drink: For by so doing, ye will *heap coals of fire on his head*—will probably turn away his resentment from you. However ye may be *persecuted for righteousness sake*, suffer all gladly,

for

for the joy that is ſet before you. Should the ſons of Belial ſtone you even unto death, commending your ſpirit to God, pray with your lateſt breath for your murderers, as Stephen did, ſaying, *Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge*; or as Chriſt did, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

Seeing, my beloved, that theſe things are written for your inſtruction, be wiſe, and treaſure them up in your hearts, that ye may be *men of God, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works.* It is only to them that God has promiſed *eternal life, who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality.*

Some there are, I know, who *make void the law through faith—who turn the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs,* and *uſe their liberty as an occaſion to the fleſh,* making Chriſt the miniſter of ſin. Under the pretext of exalting free grace and the redemption that is in Chriſt, they decry the law of God, and call thoſe who preach it, *legaliſts.* But ſhall we, therefore, deſiſt from inforcing the law as a rule of life? God forbid! We cannot honour our King more, than by being amenable to his laws: And that man who wilfully breaks any one of them, has not faith in Chriſt.

St. Peter predicted that *falſe prophets* ſhould ariſe, who would *count it pleaſure to riot in the day-time. Spots they are and blemiſhes* (ſays he) *ſporting themſelves with their own deceivings, while they feaſt with you—having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from ſin—beguiling unſtable ſouls—an heart they have exerciſed with covetous practices—curſed children, which have forſaken the right way, and are gone aſtray, following the way of Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs.* 2 Pet. 2. 13, &c.

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—He then ſhews the pernicious effects of their doctrine. *When they ſpeak great ſwelling words of vanity, they allure through the luſts of the fleſh, through much wantonneſs, thoſe that were clean eſcaped from them that live in error.* Inſtead of exhorting their hearers to *mortify the deeds of the* body, and *to pluck out their right eye*, or to *cut off their right hand, if it offends them*, they caution them againſt a legal ſpirit, a leaning to the law. As they are *made free by Chriſt*, they ſhould not be *again entangled in the yoke of bondage.* Thus, by fair ſpeeches, and a pompous ſhew of words, they deceive the hearts of the ſimple, and *lead captive ſilly women, laden with divers luſts.* Chriſt is much upon their tongues; and they profeſs *the love of God ſhed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghoſt*; but indeed they are perfect ſtrangers to it: *For this is the love of God* (ſays St. John) *that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous*—They are no burthen to the chriſtian, but are the joy of his heart, the comfort of his ſoul—therefore, he ſhews his love to Chriſt, by following his precepts.

If any teach otherwiſe, and conſent not to theſe wholeſome words, they ought to be conſidered as enemies to Chriſt, and true religion. *From ſuch turn away*—Theſe Antinomian teachers are the bane of chriſtianity, though they pretend to magnify Chriſt in all his offices. *They are wells without water—clouds that are carried with a tempeſt* None can draw the waters of life from them, for they are dried up—they are *broken ciſterns that can hold no water.* They are clouds which have no rain in them, and therefore can never ſatisfy the thirſty ſoul, when its *moiſture is like the drought in ſummer.* Their word will never diſtil as the dew, or as the rain upon the tender herb; for they are

light and empty, *toſſed to and fro with every wind of doctrine*, and blaſt of temptation. *While they promiſe* their hearers *liberty, they themſelves are the ſervants of corruption.* They declare that they are made free by Chriſt, and at the ſame time, are under the tyrannical ſway of ſin. But, ſays St. Peter, *ſo is the will of God, that with well-doing, ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men: As free, and not uſing your liberty, for a cloke of maliciouſneſs.* 1 Pet. 2. 15. Immediately after the words of the text, wherein we are exhorted to add to our faith all the graces, and fruits of the ſpirit, he adds, *If theſe things be in you and abound, they make you that ye ſhall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: But,* on the other hand, *he that lacketh theſe things, is blind, and cannot ſee far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old ſins.* Though his former iniquities were blotted out, and he was enlightned with the light of life, yet he is again become ſpiritually blind, and the things that make for his peace, are hid from his eyes. *Wherefore, brethren,* (continues the apoſtle) *give diligence to make your calling and election ſure.* Ye have been called by the ſpirit, and elected by the grace of God, but he has choſen you, *through ſanctification of the ſpirit unto* OBEDIENCE. Therefore, *receive not the grace of God in vain,* but do the will of God, *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameleſs.* This is the condition upon which you muſt enter into life—— Perſevere in good works, and ye ſhall perſevere in grace. Accordingly St. Peter adds, IF *ye do theſe things, ye ſhall never fall: But ſo an entrance ſhall be miniſtred unto you abundantly into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* 2 Pet. 2. 10.

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